

**INTERCULTURALITY AND  
ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA  
—INTERNATIONALIZING TEACHER EDUCATION**

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**INTERCULTURALITY AND  
ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA  
—INTERNATIONALIZING TEACHER EDUCATION**

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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**Kaisa Hahl**

**Interculturality and English as a lingua franca  
—Internationalizing teacher education**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation examines factors that distinguish an international English-medium instruction (EMI) teacher education programme from mainstream teacher education programmes. International teacher education is understood in this study as a transdisciplinary programme that is taught in English as a lingua franca (ELF) and that admits both international and domestic students. The students thus originate from different backgrounds and they are not all familiar with the local school system. The programme is mostly taught by teacher educators educated in the local context. This study explores student teachers' and teacher educators' conceptions and experiences of and adjustment to multiculturalism and English as a lingua franca in a Finnish university context. The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the roles that these factors play in implementing an international subject teacher education programme within the context of local (teacher) education.

This PhD study consists of five separate but interrelated studies that together form a more holistic picture of the phenomena studied. The five sub-studies examine the phenomena from different perspectives and aim at highlighting issues that are important for programme development. The sub-studies use various data collection methods: interviews, focus groups, student course work, questionnaires, and an excerpt from a recorded lecture. The data analysis methods consist of discursive pragmatics, thematic analysis and qualitative content analysis.

As its theoretical contribution this study weaves together the four factors of internationalization, interculturality (including the inclusion of immigrant teachers in local schools as an intercultural phenomenon), transdisciplinarity and English as a lingua franca, and conceptualizes their interrelations. On the one hand, this study reveals the complexity of constructing an international teacher education programme. On the other hand, the study provides a model for supporting teaching and learning in the context of international, transdisciplinary teacher education in order for it to serve the needs and demands of today's students, teachers, institutions and societies.

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*Keywords:* interculturality, internationalization, English as a lingua franca (ELF), English-medium instruction (EMI), multicultural education, teacher education





**Kaisa Hahl**

**Interkulttuurisuus ja englanti lingua francana  
– Opettajankoulutuksen kansainvälistäminen**

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## **TIIVISTELMÄ**

Tässä väitöstutkimuksessa tarkastellaan tekijöitä, jotka erottavat kansainvälisen englanninkielisen opettajankoulutuksen tavanomaisesta opettajankoulutuksesta. Kansainvälinen opettajankoulutus ymmärretään tässä tutkimuksessa monitieteiseksi lingua franca -englannilla opetettavaksi ohjelmaksi, jossa opiskelee kotimaisia ja kansainvälisiä eri taustoista tulevia opiskelijoita, joille kaikille paikallinen koulujärjestelmä ei ole tuttu. Koulutuksessa opettaa enimmäkseen paikallisessa koulujärjestelmässä kouluttautuneet opettajankouluttajat. Tässä tutkimuksessa tutkitaan opettajaopiskelijoiden ja opettajankouluttajien käsityksiä ja kokemuksia monikulttuurisuudesta ja lingua franca -englannista ja sopeutumisesta niihin suomalaisessa yliopistokontekstissa. Tämän väitöstutkimuksen tarkoitus on tutkia näiden tekijöiden roolia kansainvälisen aineenopettajakoulutuksen toteutuksessa paikallisen (opettajan)koulutuksen kontekstissa.

Tämä väitöstutkimus koostuu viidestä erillisestä mutta toisiinsa liittyvästä tutkimuksesta, jotka yhdessä muodostavat yhtenäisemmän kuvan tutkituista ilmiöistä. Osatutkimukset tarkastelevat ilmiöitä eri perspektiiveistä ja pyrkivät korostamaan aiheita, jotka ovat tärkeitä koulutuksen kehittämiseksi. Osatutkimuksissa käytetään erilaisia aineistonkeruumenetelmiä: haastatteluita, teemakeskusteluita, opiskelijatöitä, kyselykaavakkeita ja otetta äänitetyistä luennosta. Analyysimenetelmät koostuvat diskursiivisesta pragmatiikasta, temaattisesta analyysistä ja laadullisesta sisällönanalyysistä.

Teoreettisena kontribuutionaan tutkimus nivoo yhteen neljä päätekijää, kansainvälistymisen, interkulttuurisuuden (sisältäen maahanmuuttajaopettajien pääsyn paikallisiin kouluihin interkulttuurisena ilmiönä), monitieteisyyden ja lingua franca -englannin, sekä käsitteellistä niiden keskinäiset suhteet. Yhtäältä tämä tutkimus tuo esille kansainvälisen opettajankoulutuksen monimutkaisuuden. Toisaalta tutkimus antaa mallin sille, miten tukea opettamista ja oppimista kansainvälisessä monitieteisessä opettajankoulutuksessa, jotta se voi palvella nykypäivän opiskelijoiden, opettajien, instituutioiden ja yhteiskunnan tarpeita ja vaatimuksia.

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*Avainsanat:* interkulttuurisuus, kansainvälistyminen, lingua franca -englanti (ELF), englanninkielinen opetus, monikulttuurisuuskasvatus, opettajankoulutus



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Espoo, May 2016  
Kaisa Hahl

# LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

This PhD dissertation is based on the following five original publications that are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals (Publications I–V):

## **Publication I:**

Hahl, K., & Löfström, E. (2016). Conceptualizing interculturality in multicultural teacher education. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*.

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## **Publication II:**

Dervin, F., & Hahl, K. (2015). Developing a portfolio of intercultural competences in teacher education: The case of a Finnish international programme. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 59(1), 95–109.

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## **Publication III:**

Hahl, K., Järvinen, H.-M., & Juuti, K. (2014). Accommodating to English-medium instruction in teacher education in Finland. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*. DOI: 10.1111/ijal.12093

## **Publication IV:**

Hahl, K. (2016). Co-constructing meaning and context in international teacher education. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, 5(1), 83–105.

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## **Publication V:**

Hahl, K., & Paavola, H. (2015). “To Get a Foot in the Door”: New Host Country Educated Immigrant Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Employability in Finland. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(3), 35–51.

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The original articles are attached to the end of the printed dissertation but removed from this electronic version. The articles can be found online with the DOI numbers from the publishers’ websites.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

Teacher education forms an integral part of a country's national education system as it educates teachers within the country's institutional structures and educational policies. As such, teacher education reflects the particular characteristics of the national education system and upholds strong relations with local schools (Snoek & Zogla, 2009). Teachers are thus educated for a local school system with its predetermined educational policies and aims. Teacher educators are also supposed to represent and relay such values and attitudes that are said to be respected and expected of teachers in the particular school system (OECD, 2015; Toom & Husu, 2012). As student teachers themselves have usually completed their schooling within the same system, they are familiar with it and with the professional roles that they are expected to practice as teachers. An English-medium international teacher education programme in a non-English speaking country may function therefore in a somewhat different setting. First of all, the teaching language of the programme must be changed from a local language (that may be rarely spoken in other parts of the world) to English that is used as a contact language—a *lingua franca*—between speakers from different first languages (Jenkins, 2014). Secondly, such a programme also has students who have relocated to a new country either permanently or temporarily and they are not familiar with the school system for which they are being prepared and qualified. As teaching is conducted locally and contextually, a programme catering to an international and diverse student body needs yet to ensure the development of the key competences for teachers' work and which are succinctly expressed as the following: Teachers should be able (1) to work with others, (2) to work with knowledge, technology and information, and (3) to work with and in society (European Commission, 2005; see also European Commission, 2011). As societies and schools have become more diverse in recent years, there is a renewed urgency to develop critical competences in order to deal with complex and sensitive issues related to equality, social justice, diversity and discrimination (Banks, 2008; Zeichner, 2009). Existing beliefs, values, assumptions and norms related to teaching and learning need to be challenged and contested to ensure equitable education for all. Increasing the use of ICT, incorporating real-life, integrated and student-centred tasks and projects as part of school work demand new transdisciplinary competences and experience from teachers (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014; Keeves, Burley, & Alagumalai, 2013).

This PhD study sets out to examine particular factors that distinguish an international teacher education programme from mainstream teacher education programmes. Although the international teacher education programme in the context of this study is mostly taught by local teacher educators (who have also completed

their education within the national education system), it is taught using English as teaching language and its students originate from different geographical, linguistic, educational and cultural backgrounds and they are not necessarily familiar with the local school system. By gathering data about student teachers' and teacher educators' experiences and conceptions of multiculturalism and English as a lingua franca, and the employment opportunities of programme graduates, the purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the roles that these factors play in implementing an international teacher education programme within the context of local (teacher) education. The phenomena are studied in this dissertation from different perspectives but only in one particular programme and in one particular context. Instead of providing conclusive generalizations of international teacher education, this study aims at contributing to theoretical understanding about teaching and learning in a multicultural environment where the factors of internationalization, interculturality, the use of English as a lingua franca and a transdisciplinary context play interrelated roles. When the roles of these factors are more clearly defined, it will be possible to develop an international programme to be coherent and context-specific. The red line connecting the five sub-studies and research in this dissertation is research-based development of teacher education.

## **1.1 Internationalization of (teacher) education**

The internationalization of teacher education can mean different things in different contexts. It is widely believed that teachers should be equipped with global/international perspectives in education to be able to serve the needs of their diverse students. Different actions and solutions have been taken to address the issue of internationalizing teacher education (e.g. Ochoa, 2010). There have been attempts to make teacher education programmes more international by incorporating international field experience during pre-service teacher education in order to broaden student teachers' perspectives and understanding of diversities in new surroundings (e.g. in China: Lai, Gu, & Hu, 2015; in Australia: Santoro, 2014; in the US: Walters, Garii, & Walters, 2009). Other endeavours to internationalize teacher education include sharing and comparing teacher education research between colleagues from different countries in order to understand practices from different perspectives and gain a more global view on education (e.g. in Australia and the US: Olmedo & Harbon, 2010). Some teacher education programmes are considered international when they revise their curricula to include courses related to, for example, international relations and policies and global knowledge and perspectives (e.g. in the US: Hansen, 2013). There is also past research on immigrant or international student teachers taking part in mainstream teacher education in English-speaking countries in order to find out about their adjustment to the new context. For example, Cole and Stuart (2005) have studied racism inflicted on immigrant student teachers in the UK during their practice placements. Barton,



Hartwig and Cain (2015, p. 150) have studied international students' "unique experiences" during teaching practice in Australia. However, very little is yet known of international teacher education programmes that are specifically designed for an international body of students to be qualified teachers in a local context and that are taught in English as a lingua franca in a country that is not English-speaking.

Since late last century English-medium instruction (EMI) programmes have been set up in countries where English is not an official language in order to increase the mobility and migration of students in Europe and beyond (Maiworm & Wächter, 2014). As internationalization of universities (rated partly by the number of international programmes and international students and staff) promotes universities' international rankings and may be a profitable source of income from fee-paying<sup>1</sup> international students, the trend of setting up EMI programmes is expected to continue in non-English speaking countries (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2013). The use of English as a lingua franca makes it possible for students and teachers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to study and teach in the same programme. Besides providing opportunities for students to become more mobile and global, and gain access to such education that they might not have in their local context, EMI programmes can enable international staff to relocate and gain diverse work experience as well as contribute to the host context. Similarly, an English-medium programme can make it easier for immigrants with limited local language skills to enter higher education. Setting up EMI programmes also serves as part of 'internationalization at home' (Crowther, Joris, Otten, Nilsson, Teekens, & Wächter, 2000) that can benefit the domestic students who participate in the same programmes and courses with international students.

An English-medium teacher education programme can provide an opportunity for international students and newcomers to a country to gain access to teacher education and become qualified teachers. The populations in Europe and elsewhere are becoming increasingly diverse through migration (either permanent or temporary and either voluntary or forced, and for various reasons related to e.g. family, study, work, political or religious persecution, etc.) and this is reflected in the diversities of school students, but similar diversity does not show in teachers (OECD, 2010; Santoro, 2007; Zeichner, 2009). Thus the schools are in need of teachers of diverse backgrounds so that the school staff would mirror the demographics of society (OECD, 2010; Santoro, 2007; Sleeter & Milner, 2011). Immigrant teachers can be important role-models for immigrant (background) students in encouraging them to reach their goals and full potential, but also for students of any origin, immigrant or otherwise (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009; Schmidt & Block, 2010). Nevertheless, irrespective of background, it is important

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<sup>1</sup> No tuition fees have been charged from domestic or international students in most programmes in Finnish universities, including the context of this study. The situation will change in 2017. See discussion in Section 7.3.

that all teachers are exposed to critical perspectives to multicultural education so that they learn how to examine their own experiences, behaviours and discourses and can act as change agents in the schools to educate students to widen their worldviews and perceptions (Santoro, 2015).

Using English as a lingua franca in a study programme is often a new experience for many of the teachers (and perhaps students) and it is not uncommon that teachers are expected to start teaching with little preparation (Airey, 2011; Hellekjær, 2010). However, in an international programme it is not only the change in language that demands attention and accommodation. Merely changing the language and mixing local and international students in a joint programme is not sufficient to create a purposeful and genuinely integrated learning environment. Intercultural encounters between students and teachers from different backgrounds do not automatically develop students' or teachers' critical competences to deal with diversities (Deardorff, 2011; Dervin, 2010). The mix of multicultural students from various educational, linguistic and cultural backgrounds and the use of English as a lingua franca are aspects that demand special attention so that an international programme in a particular context can be developed to be coherent and context-specific. In a transdisciplinary teacher education programme that admits students of different disciplinary backgrounds, the students and teachers work together across disciplines, languages and contexts to integrate approaches and perspectives. Besides local and contextual knowledge, internationalization of teacher education and internationalization at home require emphasis on globally relevant knowledge, perspectives and competences so that such programmes can serve both the international and domestic students (Harrison & Peacock, 2010).

## 1.2 Transdisciplinarity in teacher education

Transdisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity are related concepts. The concept 'interdisciplinarity' is often used to refer to a dialogue with different branches of knowledge through the interaction between disciplines as well as through the negotiation of the boundaries of disciplines (Klein, 2004). Teacher education is described as interdisciplinary when it integrates different subjects and disciplines within education, and shares approaches and practices that create synergy from one subject to another to look for associations and opportunities for interaction (Karppinen, Kallunki, Kairavuori, Komulainen, & Sintonen, 2013). Palaiologou (2010, p. 276), however, criticizes the extent that interdisciplinarity can reach by writing that "interdisciplinarity links disciplines and develops methods that focus on problems-solving [sic] and team-working but is limited to the boundaries of each discipline." Therefore, because of these limitations and in line with Palaiologou (2010; see also Keeves, Burley, & Alagumalai, 2013), I have chosen to use the concept of *transdisciplinarity* to describe the nature of teacher education in this study. Teaching and learning (whether in school or teacher education) do not

happen in isolation from the real world but they are continuously influenced by different social, cultural, political and economic elements. Instead of merely linking different disciplines for problem-solving and teamworking (interdisciplinarity), transdisciplinarity in education works with pluralist approaches from various disciplines to serve a particular context and develops and adapts to the complexities of a changing modern society (Palaiologou, 2010).

Teacher education needs to respond to the changing requirements of the society at large, answer to the increasing demands by the students, equip the future teachers with competences that correspond to the necessary skills and knowledge required in teacher's work, and ignite a will in teachers to commit to developing themselves (Brandenburg & Wilson, 2013; Lavonen, Korhonen, & Juuti, 2015). Although in teacher education it is possible to predict some of the necessary changes and adopt and implement new measures ahead-of-time, many times programmes react in hindsight and adjust to for example new school curricula after the curricula have already been revised. A teacher education programme is always a compromise where a selection of courses, contents and learning objectives is fit within a framework of degree requirements and limited credits. Whenever degree requirements are under reconsideration and when there is an opportunity to make changes to the number of credits or course scope and contents, long and tedious negotiations and considerations can ensue to agree on what is vital and the most beneficial for new teachers. New school curricula make great demands on teachers to continue changing their roles from mere instructors to facilitators and to provide opportunities for more student-centred and transdisciplinary real-world-based learning (e.g. Hilton, 2010; Niemi, Multisilta, Lipponen, & Vivitsou, 2014). National curricula may also lag behind international advancements in technology and new and meaningful approaches to learning (Brown-Martin, 2014). In order for teacher education and teacher educators to answer to these demands, teaching in teacher education needs to develop and adopt changes that reflect the kind of teaching needed in schools so that teacher educators not only instruct about the good practices but 'practice what they preach' (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2006; Brandenburg & Wilson, 2013). Common criticism of teacher education programmes internationally often includes that theory and practice seem distant from one another, courses are fragmented and incoherent, or teachers do not share a similar conception of teaching (e.g. Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; Hammerness, 2013).

In programme development it is important to take a holistic approach to improving teaching and programme content and not only focus on individual teachers and their practices (Biggs, 2001; Parpala, Löfström, & Kaivola, 2009). However, in the end it is the individual teachers who are responsible for the daily teaching and its quality, and thus it is imperative to empower and engage all teachers in taking ownership of their teaching and yet commit to improving their teaching and courses together as a professional community. Starting an international

teacher education programme is a leap into a new arena for teacher educators who have taught in a national framework and had a student body who is well familiar with the national school system and its practices. An international English-medium teacher education programme also means replacing domestic, local language course literature with English-medium literature. This may bring in additional challenges as the local educational scene may emphasize different pedagogical issues and questions than the literature available in English. Therefore selecting course literature and lecture content needs careful reconsideration even if the objectives of learning in the international programme are comparable to those in the mainstream programmes.

The development of an international programme situated in a local transdisciplinary teacher education context thus requires investigation from multiple perspectives. The next sections will discuss in more detail the theoretical backgrounds of the larger themes of this study and their effects in an international teacher education programme: interculturality in teacher education (Section 2) and English as a lingua franca (Section 3). The context of this study will be detailed in Section 4 and it precedes the research questions (Section 5) and method (Section 6). The final section (Section 7) will discuss the findings of this study, present the conclusions as well as implications and recommendations based on the previous. This study concludes with ethical considerations and suggestions for further research.

The personal history, personal theories and ideologies of a researcher have an impact on what is studied and how (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Therefore, I will first describe and set my personal position in this research.

### **1.3 Personal viewpoint**

A research process such as the one examined here is of course not carried out on one's own but it is a negotiation of perspectives, interests and conceptions between all the researchers involved (in this case between myself and my supervisors and co-authors). However, as this work will bring out my understanding of the themes discussed I thus find it important to briefly sketch a picture of my own history and share part of my own development and learning as related to the multicultural and international. I had just completed my subject teacher education and began my Master's studies in English Philology when a project that examined the potential of an international teacher education programme was starting in fall 2009. I seized the opportunity of being involved in something that was promising to become multicultural and international. I had extensive experience of being 'international,' being an immigrant, dealing with diverse people from various backgrounds and locations, having a bilingual family with dual citizenships, and I believed I thrived in it. After relocating to Finland after about a decade in Can-

ada, teaching started to seem like an attractive career and a way to combine English and my knowledge and experiences from my years in North America. Through my children I had followed education in schools in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and British Columbia and the capital area of Finland (in both national and international schools), and become familiar with different practices. Nonetheless, the word ‘multicultural’ still meant for me the distinctions of being of a certain origin or a nation-state. Although I considered myself ‘international,’ I did not yet see the multicultural in myself, unless I was abroad.

During my language teacher education, substitute teaching at a school, and in particular the teaching practices and a pedagogical study that I had carried out in teacher training schools, I had witnessed some positive changes in language teaching from my own years at school. I was, however, disappointed at the heterogeneity of teaching quality, the overuse of the mother tongue in foreign language classes, and a lack of discussion in the target language in the language classes (Harjanne & Tella, 2009; Kuoppala<sup>2</sup>, 2009). Although originally an English as a foreign language speaker, I was now viewing English rather from a native-speaker standard thanks to my years of living in a native English-speaking environment. However, through my studies and research at the university I was being introduced to the world and concept of English as a lingua franca (e.g. Mauranen, 2006).

During this PhD process I have had multiple, interrelated roles as a researcher, teacher educator, a ‘pedagogical’ coordinator and a tutor in the international programme. I have been fortunate to be involved in different aspects of the programme and cooperated with my colleagues in the department. On the one hand, I have been able to gain diverse knowledge of practical and administrative issues related to programme development. On the other hand, by studying and delving into the theoretical backgrounds of this study, collecting data and conducting research, attending international conferences to present my studies, and discussing and examining these theories and studies with my fellow PhD students and other researchers, I have gradually constructed a deeper understanding of the issues. Being part of the teaching staff has been important for me for many reasons. Through my own teaching and research I have gained a more contextual awareness and insight related to diversities in people, education and school systems. Through teaching, biannual student feedback and frequent personal contact with students I have been able to better see the students’ perspectives in the programme. Learning to teach student teachers as a teacher educator will be a long journey that has started with reading literature and observing both colleagues and student teachers, through trial and error in practice and teacher reflection, and it has been an essential component of gaining an inside look into the themes studied.

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<sup>2</sup> Formerly Kuoppala, now Hahl.

I have been responsible for the compilation of course topics, content and assessment methods in subject didactic course units (in particular that of the humanities subjects' side). The drafting of the course content and topics has always been based on the objectives in the degree requirements in cooperation with the other teachers teaching in the course unit. The aim (not always realized) has been to have all of the teachers meet face-to-face in a planning meeting twice a year before each subject didactics course to agree on the topics, themes, methods, assignments and assessment criteria. We have utilized student feedback and experience from the previous years and made adjustments accordingly where possible and deemed necessary and beneficial. My responsibility has also been to devise or adjust the assessment criteria as per discussions, compile instructions for general assignments, and (in close cooperation with the programme's administrative coordinator) complete the final course outline, and keep teachers and students informed.

Through international projects and teacher exchanges I have had an opportunity to visit and acquaint myself with teacher education programmes, international degree programmes and schools in other European countries. Visiting classrooms in different locations has enhanced my understanding of the diversities related to students, teachers, methods, practices and various resources, and it has continually reminded me of the importance of the quality of teacher education. An important aspect of developing and integrating an international programme into the local context is to recruit school teachers to mentor student teachers during guided practices. During this PhD research I have been involved in several mentor training courses that have given me an opportunity to learn and consider day-to-day stories from school life, the practices of reflection and the enthusiasm of teachers to continue developing themselves. A mentor training workshop also took me to South Africa that was an intense experience in not only observing diversities in an unfamiliar setting but encountering feelings of being an outsider and the Other, and yet feeling connected to the local staff by similar interests in teaching and teacher education.

This process of completing my PhD thesis has been a profound journey of personal growth and learning through critically reflecting on my own perceptions, beliefs and understandings—of teaching, teacher education, multicultural education and teacher reflection. I have made realizations of my own personal life and how I have been othered, and how I have othered and categorized other people, and how I continue to do so in spite of being precautionous. This process has widened my perspectives about others and their experiences around me. By reading, studying and examining critical multicultural literature, I have transformed myself from the essentialist ideas of multiculturalism to being able to critically contest my own conceptions about diversities, cultures and identities (e.g. Dervin, 2011b; Holliday, 2011; see Section 2). Teaching and researching in the programme have given me a front-row seat to see and work with the diversity and potential in stu-

dent teachers, mentors in schools and teacher education, but also feel the frustration of large organizations changing slowly, witness the challenges faced in today's society, and ponder on the resistance found in schools and systems to become more inclusive when it comes to diversities related to, for example, student and teacher backgrounds, language skills or teaching methods.

## 2 INTERCULTURALITY AS A GOAL FOR (TEACHER) EDUCATION

Multiculturalism is often associated solely with issues related to ethnic origins, especially but not only in colloquial speech. For example, Finland has been considered a monocultural country until the incoming of immigrants in the last couple of decades. However, the traditional understanding of the notion of a monocultural country needs to be contested. In the case of Finland, the country has for centuries been home to, for example, numerous languages (Finnish, Swedish, several Sami languages, Romany), numerous groups of minority religions and different social classes (Holm & Zilliacus, 2009). The growth of immigrant populations and large numbers of refugees have brought in new dimensions to diversities all over the world. Visible cultural differences are more noticeable and they may take attention away from such diversity and similarities that cannot be detected explicitly (Dervin, 2010; Holm & Londen, 2010).

### 2.1 Interculturality in teacher education

Teachers are key actors in promoting equality and social justice as well as intercultural understanding in education among all students (Banks, 2008). Teachers are professionals who hold social role positions and thus they are expected to have a strong sense of moral purpose and behave in a way that abides to prescribed educational aims and values (OECD, 2015; Toom & Husu, 2012). The changing demographics of societies and the diversification of student bodies have, however, brought in changes and a need for adaptation in schools, along with a concern for the development of new competences for teachers. The discourse of multiculturalism in schools is not new in teacher education and it has been discussed in literature for decades (e.g. Gay & Howard, 2000; Kansanen, Tirri, Meri, Krokfors, Husu, & Jyrhämä, 2000; Nieto, 1999). Teacher education programmes often accommodate specific courses that focus on multicultural education with the aims of enhancing understanding of diversity between individuals (Assaf, Garza, & Battle, 2010). However, in order for a programme to be truly intercultural it is essential that intercultural aspects are integrated into the whole programme and not only offered separately as teaching content in an individual study unit (Seeberg & Minick, 2012). The issue is made more complex by the diversity of opinions over what these intercultural aspects are or what multicultural education in essence is (Dervin & Tournebise, 2013; Dervin, Paatela-Nieminen, Kuoppala, & Riitaoja, 2012). The foundation to and objective of these aspects may be problematic even in programmes that advertise intercultural content (Perry & Southwell, 2011). Programmes often lack a critical understanding of diversities and cultures,



and thus instead of advancing interculturality and intercultural understanding, they may reify stereotypes through content made up of generalized cultural descriptions and simplified images about different cultures that further differentiate and distance people from each other (Gorski, 2009).

There are different concepts that are used for describing the diversity of and among individuals and peoples. Two of the concepts used here, multicultural and intercultural, are also polysemic and have different—but also synonymous—definitions (Holm & Zilliacus, 2009; Harbon & Moloney, 2015). Therefore, it is always important to define the concepts used and discussed. UNESCO (2006) distinguishes between the multicultural and intercultural, according to which the *‘multicultural’* describes the heterogeneity and diverse nature of human society or group, and the *‘intercultural’* refers to the (positive) processes and relations of interaction and negotiation between individuals in multicultural contexts. This is also the starting point for multicultural discussion in this research. I have chosen to use the term ‘multicultural education’<sup>3</sup> (instead of for example ‘intercultural education’) to mean education for and about diversities. The following will explain what I mean when talking about multicultural education.

## 2.2 Cultures and identities in multicultural education

We have grown up with, been taught by the school, and infiltrated by the media with stereotypes about people from different countries in which certain traits, characteristics or labels are attached to people from a particular group or a nation-state and generalized to fit every person from that group (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). During school years “children are socialised into a national identity” either through hidden or official curricula (Piller, 2011, pp. 60–61). Shared national cultures are a new invention by the recent history but it is under their influence that today’s generations have been raised. Teaching of national cultures follows the nationalist paradigm where one language, one culture and one country make a unity where one term is synonymous with the other (Risager, 2007; Sayer & Meadows, 2012). This distortion of the relation between language, culture and country has persisted although immigration and emigration have increased in recent decades. Furthermore, there are numerous nation-states that have been constituted with more than one official national language, for example Finland (with Finnish and Swedish) and Switzerland (with German, French, Italian and Romansh). The strengthening of nation-states and national cultures was important in post-World War Europe and it helped to secure a vision of a shared understanding of what it was to be a citizen of a country and thus feel more united when countries

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<sup>3</sup> One of the reasons for the use of the term multicultural education is that it is the name used for the course in the university context in which this study is embedded.

were being rebuilt (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Language teaching and language pedagogies have always included a cultural component but the cultural aspect became intensified during the 1990's along with the acceleration of internationalization (for an in-depth look into the beginnings, changes and developments in culture pedagogy, see Risager, 2007). Teaching a foreign language thus entails teaching the 'culture' associated with speakers of that particular language. In foreign language, history, or for example geography classes it is customary to engage students in cultural comparison to find and teach differences between people's characteristics, behaviours, eating habits, etc. (Dervin, 2011a; Sayer & Meadows, 2012). Even school textbooks in different subjects such as history, social sciences and religion may include fixed and generalized ideas of the identities, characters and customs of people in certain nation-states, both of 'us' and the 'Others' (Hahl, Niemi, Johnson Longfor, & Dervin, 2015). Through cultural comparison, complex individuals and interactions are reduced to simplified and "fragmented cultural tidbits" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 93). Such oversimplification and generalization overlook the similarities that all human beings share and ignore the individual behind the stereotype.

The goal of teaching about the 'cultural practices' or characteristics of speakers of a particular language or citizens of a nation is to improve cross-national interaction and communication (Shi-xu, 2001). However, the cultural practices and assumptions need to be problematized. By using nationalist or globally shared stereotypes of people, it is alleged that a membership to a nation influences and moulds a person's identity more than other factors and belongings such as gender, religion, class, generation, education, profession and emotional engagements (Dervin, 2011a; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Thus they give a distorted, one-sided, fixed picture of a person's identity. Instead, identities should be seen as fluid and continually co-constructed in interactions with others, even within the same discourse (Dervin, 2013; Gu, Patkin, & Kirkpatrick, 2014). Each individual can simultaneously have multiple, fluid identities that are constructed with others as s/he positions and presents him/herself in different situations (Dervin, 2013; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002).

Piller (2011) proposes that an essentialist, entity view of culture ("treating culture as something people have or to which they belong") is replaced with a constructionist, process view of culture ("treating culture as something people do or which they perform"; Piller, 2011, p. 15; see also Sarangi, 1994), so that culture could be understood as fluid social constructions that are renegotiated in interactions and relations between people (Dervin, 2011b). For Frame (2014, p. 36), culture is constantly undergoing "evolution through the interactions of its members." However, culture is not just actions. Culture is also not a thing that can be passed down unchanged from one generation to the next in a nation-state but it is continually re- and co-constructed with others. Each individual belongs to different cultures in different situations in society, for different purposes, and with different

groups of people. Each person belongs to different cultural groups simultaneously and negotiates his/her identities in interaction with others on a daily basis (Dervin, 2011b, 2013; Holliday, 2011). My understanding of culture corresponds to that of Shi-xu (2015, p. 3) who defines culture as “the set of concepts, identities, representations, attitudes, values, symbols, styles, rules, patterns, [and] (power) relations found in the praxis of particular social communities.” Culture is not “a straightjacket of values that make people act in a certain way” (Breidenbach & Nyíri, 2009, p. 76). Nevertheless, power hierarchies and the (positive or negative) influences of other individuals and groups—either belonging to the same cultural group or another—cannot be completely ignored on a person’s behaviour, actions or discourses (Shi-xu, 2001). It is the impact and outcomes of behaviours and discourses that should be contextually analyzed. The notion of culture is commonly used even as an excuse for finding differences between people (Wikan, 2002) and to the detriment of ignoring similarities. Differences might only be found between different groups of people while diversity within a group and each individual is overlooked (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006). Thus individual characteristics and behaviour are neglected when people within a group are desired to be seen similar or the same.

Teacher educators, teachers and students are challenged to acknowledge the diversity in others but avoid culturalism and stereotyping (Dervin, 2011b; Holliday, 2011). Culturalism refers to mere knowledge about various cultures, nation-states or different nationalities that easily turn into stereotypes. A culturalist view of another person relies on limited and even biased ideas of cultural knowledge of others (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006). While stereotypes can be useful in making sense of the world, they can at the same time be dangerous and damaging in interactions between people. Stereotyping is usually accompanied by a negative connotation when the Other is considered inferior to Self and one’s own group (Dervin, 2011b; Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2010; Holliday, 2011; Wood, 2003). Alternatively, the Other can be considered exotic and better than one’s own group. Individuals are not seen for what they are in their own right but they are assumed to be and act according to the stereotype that describes their group. Yet an assumed or imposed national identity may be in contradiction with one’s own cultural identities (Holliday, 2011). Instead of trying to suppress stereotypes or produce lists of them, it is important to consider how stereotypes are created and co-constructed and why people so easily resort to them (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006). If culture is held as the factor that differentiates people from one another, it is also easy to use culture as an excuse or alibi to not take responsibility for an action (Wikan, 2002). Culture might be blamed for one’s failures or credited for one’s successes. There is also a danger to ‘respect’ someone’s culture in such a way that the person’s actions are overlooked and the action is not seen from the perspective of social justice or equity. Therefore people need to develop a critical ability to question and contest one’s own and others’ cultural claims, assumptions and

teachings (Breidenbach & Nyíri, 2009). According to Barnett (1997), criticality consists of knowledge (critical reason), the self (critical reflection) and the world (critical action). I consider the goal of critical multicultural education in educational contexts to be a state where teacher educators, teachers and students are able to meet and encounter others through their diversities and not nationalities and stereotypes. The desired outcome is positive where social justice and equity of all is embraced and enacted but the incessant journey of learning includes conflicts, preconceptions and prejudice that need to be continually acknowledged and guarded.

## **2.3 Approaching diversity in teacher education**

As immigration in Europe (and elsewhere in the world) has increased tremendously in the last couple of years, the issue of national identities and accepting diversity has also polarized. Thus it has never been as topical as it is today to educate teacher educators and teachers (and other citizens) about critical perspectives to multicultural education so that school children and students will grow up with a wider worldview and abilities to question one's own assumptions and actions. Teachers play a great role in guiding their students in forming their worldviews. Thus teachers must know how to deliberate on their own conceptions of diversity so that they can support their students in developing their conceptions and examining their choices and behaviours (cf. Soilamo, 2008; see also Itkonen, Talib, & Dervin, 2015; McDonough, 2013). This necessitates that teacher educators first guide student teachers to articulate and reflect on their own practice related to multicultural issues (Turner, 2013).

Multicultural education cannot merely be empty words that propose acceptance or tolerance of diversity but instead it must start with critical reflections and analyses of an individual's own perspectives, past experiences, behaviours, and discourses. In teaching and learning, in teacher education as well, students' previous education and knowledge needs to be taken into account as new knowledge is constructed by building on the prior knowledge in order for the students to learn and develop their conceptions (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Previous knowledge is not only learned knowledge in schools and institutions but it encompasses experiences all the way from childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood, and moulds a person's perspectives and frames of reference. Student teachers must also reflect on the development of their own teacherhood through their previous knowledge and experiences (Husu, Toom, & Patrikainen, 2008). Reflection of one's own and others' behaviours and conceptions is a basis for understanding and responding to experiences but it is not an easy skill to learn. When teachers learn to critically question the choices they make in teaching and in interactions with students, reflection becomes an integral part of their pedagogical knowledge (Husu, Toom, & Patrikainen, 2008; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005).

Teachers can be role models for their students in approaching and dealing with multicultural issues and situations, and they have an influence on their students of how they perceive and conduct social justice and just education. Although later on in their careers teachers must mainly reflect on their actions and behaviour on their own as they usually conduct teaching alone as well, in particular in the beginning it is essential that student teachers' reflection is guided by teacher educators and school mentors (Husu, Toom, & Patrikainen, 2008; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005).

A reflective dialogue with other more experienced teachers is necessary to learn to more critically and more objectively review one's deeply held beliefs, conceptions and assumptions about teaching in general and aspects related to it (Harbon & Moloney, 2013; Husu, Toom, & Patrikainen, 2008; Liu & Milman, 2010; Loughran, 2006). These beliefs have necessarily not formed during teacher education but they have started forming years ago during student teachers' own school experiences. Although each person has their own belief system, it is culturally and socially co-constructed. Oftentimes the beliefs may be so persistent and deeply rooted into one's thinking that they are considered self-evident. Research suggests that teacher education may be unsuccessful in helping students recognize their beliefs and challenge their beliefs about teaching (Löfström & Poom-Valickis, 2013).

Students therefore need to be guided and supported in challenging their conceptions against the pedagogical theories, both in group discussions and self-reflection (Loughran, 2006; Santoro, 2009). It is essential that theoretical knowledge gained during teacher education is renegotiated and examined in the context of one's own learning and experiences so that it can have relevance and effect in practice (Johnson, 1997). Sharing experiences among students from diverse backgrounds is important but it should not only stay at the level of interesting 'cultural' descriptions. Instead it should be integrated as essential content of negotiating meanings and conceptions in the multicultural programme (Kumaravadivelu, 2008). Subject knowledge, personal perspectives and multicultural aspects are integrated in a transdisciplinary approach in the educational context. As student teachers learn to reflect on their own conceptions and understanding of learning and teaching, they can weave them into their own personal pedagogies that they draw upon in teaching (Loughran, 2006; Turner, 2013). When teacher educators and student teachers learn to recognize stereotypical and other culturalist ideas in their discourses and behaviours, they can begin to realize and examine how such stands, perspectives and actions influence a learning environment that is supposed to support equality and justice to all students as unique individuals, i.e. sustain interculturality in the classroom and beyond (Dervin, 2011b; Holliday, 2011).

There is a host of research and literature on global/diversity education, educating a global teacher, future pedagogies, or social justice in education (e.g. Brandenburg & Wilson, 2013; Down & Smyth, 2013; OECD, 2010; Swennen & van

der Klink, 2009; Zeichner, 2009) but little is yet known about multicultural issues in an international teacher education programme. Prior studies show that among teacher educators and student teachers perceptions of diversity are often very different and narrow (e.g. Dervin, Paatela-Nieminen, Kuoppala, & Riitaoja, 2012; Liu & Milman, 2010; Yang & Montgomery, 2013). Yet the development of a coherent intercultural programme is possible only after teacher educators are first willing to explore their beliefs, conceptions, assumptions and practices and share them with others so that these can be discussed, examined and negotiated together (Assaf, Garza, & Battle, 2010). Student teachers need guidance in reflecting on diversity and they rely on teacher educators and mentors to encourage and engage them in such practice (Harbon & Moloney, 2013; Liu & Milman, 2010). This study aims to fill the gaps in earlier research and investigates how both student teachers and teacher educators discuss notions related to multiculturalism and the kind of conceptions they have of interculturality in an international teaching and learning environment. The following research question is thus formulated to examine these issues:

*How does multiculturalism manifest itself and how is interculturality constituted and negotiated in teaching and learning in an international teacher education programme?*

## 2.4 Diversifying the teaching profession

Teacher education and schools need to also address the diversification of population and student bodies by enabling and welcoming the access and inclusion of diverse teachers representing different backgrounds (OECD, 2010; Santoro, 2007; Sleeter & Milner, 2011; Talib, 2005; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). It is argued that teachers belonging to a minority may better understand minority students' experiences if they have themselves experienced and reflected on those experiences of marginalization (Kohli, 2009; Santoro, 2007). The presence, experience and expertise of immigrant teachers can also help different background students to find more common ground and reduce the existence or emergence of stereotypes and othering (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009). As education tends to be national and is usually conducted in the national languages, it can be problematic for immigrants to enter the teaching profession, in particular in countries where the local languages (in both schools and universities) are small on the global scale. In spite of local language courses, it may take years before one would learn the local languages enough to be able to study academic content in that language. An international teacher education programme in English can thus remove one of the barriers to teaching and provide an opportunity to become qualified.

Nevertheless, learning the language of the new country is an integral issue in gaining work. As most schools are of course run in the local languages, and the number of international schools or bilingual streams in schools are limited, finding

employment after gaining qualifications can have its own challenges and hindrances. Integrating into the host context usually requires learning the local language to at least some extent, and language skills have been shown to be one of the main determinants in finding employment (George, Ghaze, Brennenstuhl, & Fuller-Thomson, 2012; Shumilova, Cai, & Pekkola, 2012). The demands for adequate language skills in addition to professional skills are justified but the demand for excellent speaking and writing skills may be unreasonable and discriminating compared to one's tasks at work (Ombudsman for Minorities, 2011).

According to prior studies, immigrants generally face more difficulties in securing employment than the equally educated majority group (in the Netherlands: George, Ghaze, Brennenstuhl, & Fuller-Thomson, 2012; in Canada: van Doorn, Scheepers, & Davegos, 2012). In Ireland a study shows that minority job seekers may experience discrimination on the basis of their foreign-sounding names although their education is gained in the host country (McGinnity & Lunn, 2011). Muslim immigrants in many EU countries have faced resistance and unemployment on the basis of their religion (Fleischmann & Dronkers, 2010). A study in Canada shows that immigrant teachers may be considered less qualified and thus less likely to become employed because of their foreign-sounding accents or an assumption of a lack of knowledge in local practices and 'culture' (Cho, 2010). Immigrant teachers' experiences of discrimination based on a foreign name or nationality, language background and skin colour have also been reported in a study about immigrant teachers' access and contribution to schools and teaching in Finland (Lefever, Paavola, Berman, Guðjónsdóttir, Talib, & Gísladóttir, 2014). When launching an international teacher education programme, it is important to keep an eye on the big picture and investigate how teacher graduates perceive their employment prospects. For the reasons discussed above, the factors influencing immigrant teachers' possibilities for securing employment may differ from those of domestic teachers. By finding out factors that hinder or promote immigrant teachers' employment opportunities in the host country, it is possible to consider whether additional support systems should be in place within or outside the institution. The aspect of employability is also crucial for the development of any education programme. Thus, in relation to the programme under review, the following question is raised in this study:

*What considerations do immigrant teacher education graduates have of their employability in the host country?*

### 3 ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN TEACHER EDUCATION

English-medium instruction (EMI) is a necessity in order to attract international degree students and exchange students to study, and international staff to relocate to non-English speaking countries. As English has emerged as the most used lingua franca in the world of travel, commerce and research, it has also solidified its position for international education programmes. Students in international EMI programmes may come together with very different educational backgrounds, their own history, past experiences, emotions and knowledge. Besides a joint interest in a particular field, it is partly their diverse experiences and backgrounds that connect them, but also a “shared non-nativeness” (i.e. English is used as a lingua franca, ELF; Hülmbauer, 2009, p. 328).

#### 3.1 Defining English as a lingua franca

English as a lingua franca (ELF) has been defined in different ways and the definitions have been modified by even the same scholars over the rather short history of ELF research, and they are not without their critics. Some of the definitions include native speakers (meaning English first language speakers from the Inner Circle, see below; Kachru, 1986) (e.g. Jenkins, 2014), some do not mention them specifically (e.g. Mauranen, 2009), and in the strictest definitions of ELF native speakers are excluded (e.g. McKay, 2009). One of the generally and recently accepted definitions define English as a lingua franca as a contact language between speakers from different first languages, including native English speakers (Jenkins, 2014, p. 2). In spite of including native speakers in the definition of ELF, some scholars yet exclude them from data collection in ELF research (e.g. Jenkins, 2007). However, not only in the context of academia, much communication in international arenas in English includes native speakers of English. Furthermore, one of the prerequisites for studying the usage of ELF is in a natural setting (Mauranen, 2012). Thus, I argue (in agreement with e.g. Mauranen, 2006) that it would be contradictory to remove native speakers of English from data collection in a legitimate international academic setting, such as this study. While many participants in EMI programmes are multilingual and some might share other first languages, what usually unites them in such programmes is that English is the *only* language that *all* of them speak. Nevertheless, ELF in itself should not be regarded as a variety of English but as a phenomenon and *use of English* (Baird, Baker, & Kitazawa, 2014). This is one aspect of ELF research that has recently been under controversy. ELF researchers have been accused of reifying ELF as a “universal code” (O’Regan, 2014, p. 7) or as “a variety” (Sewel, 2016, p. 63). Although ELF



researchers have vehemently objected to the criticism of viewing ELF either as a reified code or as a variety (e.g. Baker & Jenkins, 2015), some have also previously provided contrary, or perhaps ambiguous, definitions that may have given rise to such criticism. For example, Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011, p. 283) and Jenkins (2011, p. 928) have described ELF as “an additionally acquired language system” that native English speakers “too will need to acquire [...] in order to communicate successfully in ELF settings” (Jenkins, 2011, p. 928). While Baird, Baker and Kitazawa (2014) point out the complexity and variability of language and its integrated roles as social action in human communication, they argue that the debates over the field of ELF research will help it make progress over time by continual negotiation and reflection over researcher approaches and perspectives.

English has spread far and wide in the world and there are people who speak English as their first, second or third language in a variety that may be substantially different from the varieties that are commonly considered standard (i.e. e.g. British, American, and Australian English). Braj B. Kachru (e.g. 1986) is known for his model of Englishes where he has distinguished different kinds of English speakers in three concentric circles. The native speakers of English (i.e. those born and living for example in the UK, the US and Australia) are in the Inner Circle. The second language speakers of English are placed in the Outer Circle and include speakers of English in countries where English spread in the second stage of the world's conquests and functions as an official language but traditionally not as a native language of the citizens (e.g. the Philippines, Malaysia and India). The third circle, the Expanding Circle, includes countries where English is taught and used as a foreign language but has no official status (e.g. most of Europe, Japan, China, etc.). Kachru's circles of Englishes have also been highly criticized for being out-of-date and limited (e.g. Jenkins, 2009). For one, the dichotomy of a native/non-native speaker of English or any language is a problematic concept and for example increased migration, relocations and mixed marriages have made a supposed relationship between being born in a particular nation-state and speaking the official language of that particular nation obsolete (Doerr, 2009; Pennycook, 1994). Nevertheless, while taking into account the shortcomings, the circles of English can work as a simplified model to serve as a generalization of the different kinds of English speakers participating in EMI programmes. It serves such a function in this study as well.

### **3.2 English-medium instruction in the university**

Although in EMI programmes the majority of both teachers and students are non-native speakers of English (i.e. from the Outer and Expanding Circle), the admission requirements usually include a requisite level of English proficiency, often measured by a test based on a standard form of native English, for example IELTS or TOEFL (Ferencz, Maiworm, & Mitic, 2014). The practice of native speakers

assessing the language competence of non-native speakers has been criticized not only by ELF scholars (e.g. Jenkins, 2011; Mauranen, 2012) but also scholars of intercultural communication, one of them Piller (2011, p. 130) who asserts that “[b]eing a ‘native speaker of a language does not automatically qualify someone to pass judgement on the linguistic proficiency of speakers who use it as an additional language.” If international universities cater to international students and staff who speak English as an additional language, the proficiency of those speakers should not be assessed on the standard forms of native English (Jenkins, 2011).

The position of English as a lingua franca is different from the position of English in the school where it is a language that is usually learned as a second/foreign language. A lingua franca is often described as a medium of communication that is *used* for reaching common goals instead of *learned* according to certain linguistic norms (Mauranen, 2010; Seidlhofer, 2001). The number of non-native speakers of English has long since passed the number of native English speakers (Graddol, 2006), and thus ELF speakers should not be expected to follow a standard variety of English (Jenkins, 2007; Mauranen, 2006). ELF proponents also point out that ELF is not a deficient version of English (Jenkins, 2011; Seidlhofer, 2011). While teaching and research in an ELF environment in academia rely on fluent and strong language skills in demanding situations, the skills should not be measured against a native ‘standard’ variety of English, i.e. as adherence or deviation from native norms. Instead of mastering the forms of a particular native variety of English, it is important to be flexible and adapt to the demands of intercultural communication in a given situation (Jenkins, 2011; Mauranen, 2010).

Because the international academia is a lingua franca setting, the emphasis should be on mutual understanding and accepting negotiation for meaning as part of fluent communication (Seidlhofer, 2011). However, the conceptions of traditional language learning are deeply ingrained; the aim in foreign language learning has been to reach a language competence that resembles as closely as possible a native speaker standard (Council of Europe, 2001). Although non-native university lecturers teaching in an ELF context understand that attempting to sound like a native speaker of English is unnecessary (and seldom possible), they nevertheless often compare their own language skills to one’s who is a native speaker and find themselves inferior (e.g. in the Finnish university context: Hynninen, 2013; and Pilkinton-Pihko, 2010). The ideal accent of a native English speaker is often related to a ‘standard’ North American or a British academic English, and the fact that each language has a myriad of accents and dialects is easily forgotten (Jenkins, 2009, 2014).

Non-native lecturers have also felt that in English they are less fluent in lecturing, they provide less detail in disciplinary content, and they are less flexible to digress into additional explanatory stories related to content (e.g. in EMI university context in Sweden: Airey, 2011; in China: Hu & Lei, 2014; in Austria: Tatzl, 2011). Students, however, are sometimes more lenient on lecturers’ language

skills than the lecturers themselves. In a study set in an EMI engineering programme in Finland, students considered lecturers' level of English competence *per se* less important than their ability to use language interactively with the students, and their willingness to confirm students' understanding (Suviniitty, 2010, 2012). Nevertheless, there are also research results from EMI programmes that suggest that sometimes lecturers' English competence is simply not high enough to efficiently conduct a lecture in English and students are left with teaching that only offers the most basic content (e.g. in China: Hu & Lei, 2014). Sometimes it is the students' lower level of English competence that slows down teaching and learning in EMI programmes (e.g. in Austria: Tatzl, 2011). These findings highlight the bottom-line fact that it does make a difference what kind of language a lecturer uses and, in particular, *how* s/he uses it. Although a high enough level of English competence for both teachers and students is important, the lecturer's skill to lecture effectively and structure lecture material in a sensible way affects students' understanding as well—regardless of teaching language (in Norway: Hellekjær, 2010; in the Netherlands: Klaassen, 2001). While foreign/second language (L2) lectures can have specific problems, any prevailing communication problems from first language (L1) lectures are accentuated in lectures carried out in L2 (in Sweden: Airey & Linder, 2006; Airey, 2009).

Transdisciplinary teacher education can bring in another dimension to an ELF context as students have different majors and they are not necessarily familiar with the terminology of their peers' majors. Same is true for the teachers. As each teacher educator has a background in a certain school subject, s/he may not be knowledgeable in all the student teachers' subjects. When discussing education from the perspective of his/her own subject, s/he must consider that some of the students may not be knowledgeable in the particular subject speciality that the teacher educator represents. This also serves as a reminder that academic language has no native speakers (Mauranen, 2012). Learning and teaching in academia require familiarization with specific terminology and with the conventions of presenting knowledge—which may be accentuated but also renegotiated in a transdisciplinary context.

### 3.3 Intercultural communication

Traditionally, teaching situations employ a power dichotomy where the teacher as the main authority holds the greatest power (e.g. Cazden, 2001). Although the trend in schools has been to strive to adopt more student-centred and student-driven methods for knowledge construction and reform the teacher's role as a mentor and facilitator (e.g. Cho, Caleon, & Kapur, 2015; Cornelius & Herrenkohl, 2004; Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2008; Hogan, Nastasi, & Pressley, 1999; Niemi, Multisilta, Lipponen, & Vivitsou, 2014), much university teaching yet relies on traditional lecturing. In a teaching-learning situation an imbalance of power and

authority primarily rises from the premise that teachers usually have more knowledge (of course not true in every situation but a potential for the scope of knowledge is present) and that teachers have more knowledge about teaching and learning, i.e. the pedagogy that s/he utilizes to enable the learning situations. This asymmetry does not necessarily come from the teacher's emphasis of a status difference, but also the students' expectations of it. What is essential is how the teacher recognizes the asymmetry and employs his/her own competences for the benefit of the students' learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Intercultural communication always deals with an imbalance of power and inequality, to a lesser or greater extent (Shi-xu, 2001). In ELF situations where the teacher may have a lesser command of English than (some of) the students, the traditional power relations can be temporarily overturned, and it may create unfamiliar challenges for participants. It is often understood that power relations in a native–non-native (L1–L2) situation are asymmetrical because the L1 speaker can have the power advantage due to stronger language skills (e.g. Mauranen, 2006). However, power relations in a non-native–non-native situation can also be vastly imbalanced, as both non-native and native speakers' language competences can differ tremendously. Native and non-native speakers (or L1 and L2 speakers) should not be considered as homogenous groups with equal language skills in all language domains (Doerr, 2009). Different language proficiency levels obviously create power differences in oral communication. Many L2 speakers of English possess an excellent level of proficiency in English while others never reach fluency in speaking although they may or may not have excellent listening/writing/reading skills. Similar differences exist among native speakers, partly based, for example, on their educational and work history and personal qualities. Furthermore, besides language skills, it may be the interlocutors' origin, social status or position that creates power differences (Dervin, 2011b; Dervin & Tournebise, 2013; Piller, 2011). Power imbalances are also created from within people's attitudinal value placements (Jenkins, 2007). Piller (2011, p. 132) claims that “[w]hite native speakers of English are privileged to live with the illusion that their accents are neutral, standard and natural.” Nevertheless, even ELF speakers may place hierarchical value on different varieties of ELF (Jenkins, 2007). The hierarchization of varieties and accents of English and the categorization of people into different groups on this basis is a way of othering (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2010).

Encounters are always between two or more people and thus both parties are responsible for the success of the outcome (Dervin, 2010, 2012). It is not uncommon to hear people in ELF contexts say that it is only important to understand the message and be understood. In that view, ELF is considered to be used ‘only’ as a vehicular language; i.e. it is considered to be used only for the purposes of relaying information, and it is deemed to have no attachment to any of the cultural assump-

tions and communicative norms related to English as a native language (e.g. Kirkpatrick, 2007). However, each interlocutor comes to a communicative situation with his/her own frames of reference that they have developed and acquired over the years through their own contexts, experiences, education and life history. In international English-medium teacher education, besides understanding different accents and proficiencies of English, participants may also have to negotiate for meaning in order to comprehend each other's sometimes very different experiences, knowledge bases and contexts. Interlocutors need to look past any stereotypes and generalizations in order to see and understand the individual's personal and cultural experiences (Dervin, 2011b; Holliday, 2011). Thus language, including the use of English as a lingua franca, "can never be culturally neutral" (Baker, 2011, p. 35; Baker, 2009).

### 3.4 Strategies in ELF use

Negotiating for meaning and accommodating and adapting to an ELF context can take different forms. The use of ELF requires a mindset, ability and preparedness to adjust and be flexible to accommodate to different communicative situations. ELF speakers use a repertoire of strategies to regulate and modify language use. Speakers can *code-switch* (or *code-mix*), i.e. use or mix another language(s) that is a common resource for some of the speakers (Cogo, 2009; Klimpfinger, 2007, 2009). Code-switching can be used for different purposes: either to specify an addressee, appeal for assistance, introduce a new idea, or to signal cultural identity (Klimpfinger, 2009; see also Jenkins, 2011). Speakers also tend to *adapt* their *speech to that of the interlocutor*, and adjusting to interlocutor's accent becomes easier after hearing adapts (Jenkins, 2007). The speakers' *orientation to content* and *sharing a common concern for the success of a discussion* are also essential factors for reaching mutual understanding (Mauranen, 2012). Speakers tend to *signal non- and misunderstanding* and they *use confirmation checks* to ensure intelligibility (Mauranen, 2006). *Repetition or reformulation of speech* (either self or other) are common strategies to either foresee a possible problem or to overcome a moment of mis- or non-understanding (Björkman, 2010; Kaur, 2009). *Mediation* is a strategy that takes place when a third person intervenes after a mis- or non-understanding has happened and acts as a mediator to interpret and clarify previous utterances to others in order to further common understanding (Hynninen, 2011). An ELF context creates a 'translanguaging space' that "brings together different dimensions of multilingual speakers' linguistic, cognitive and social skills, their knowledge and experience of the social world and their attitudes and beliefs" and provides a forum where these can be re-negotiated, developed and transformed (Li Wei, 2015, pp. 178–179).

Although mis- and non-understanding in ELF communication may not be as frequent as they are sometimes believed to be (Cogo, 2009; Kaur, 2009; Mauranen, 2006), the different strategies in which speakers engage in order to reach common understanding often slow down communication (Hynninen, 2011). In the university context, lecturers also need to take into account that their speaking rate in an L2 may be slower than in their L1 (Thøgersen & Airey, 2011). Repair is a fundamental mechanism of all talk and thus not only relevant in ELF (Liddicoat, 2009). In an ELF context interlocutors may, however, need to work harder to connect their divergent backgrounds (e.g. linguistic, cultural, social, professional, emotional, etc.) and find common ground for mutual intelligibility. Thus the *negotiation for meaning* and *co-construction of communication* are essential and integral in ELF talk in order to level out differences in the interlocutors' varying degrees of English proficiency at different linguistic levels and their lack of shared social and cultural backgrounds (Mauranen, 2012).

ELF communication is often shown in a positive light in which all speakers adjust to the communicative situation without problems. Engaging in the co-construction of expressions in order to reach mutual intelligibility is portrayed as being undertaken charitably, in particular by non-native speakers (Mauranen, 2006). In fact, much research and literature on ELF that includes native speakers in the studies tend to portray native speakers as more uncompromising and less capable of adapting to ELF communication than non-native speakers (e.g. Jenkins, 2011). However, as Carey (2010, p. 90) pointed out in his study, L1 speakers of English who have relocated to new surroundings where English is not the language of the majority and where contact with other L1 speakers is rare "have every incentive to accommodate and adapt" to the new linguistic context. Besides the studies showing a positive adaptation to an ELF environment, there are also studies in higher education that reveal challenges related to the different levels and limitations in language skills by both teachers and students (see Sub-Section 3.2; e.g. Hu & Lei, 2014; Tatzl, 2011).

Although there is a growing body of literature about ELF in higher education from various perspectives (e.g. Airey, 2011; Björkman 2011; Jenkins 2014; Hynninen 2011; Mauranen 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011), little is yet known of ELF use in international teacher education. With increasing migration, it can be assumed that there will be a greater need and demand for such education in different parts of the world in the future. An English-medium, international, transdisciplinary teacher education programme gives a different setting for teaching and learning than a context where separate subjects or disciplines are taught and learned, as it is not only content that is being taught and learned but the manner and ways that knowledge and skills are taught and learned, and the need to weave them all into one's personal pedagogies (Loughran, 2006). The majority of ELF research, although not all (see e.g. Carey, 2013), has hitherto concentrated on spoken English instead of written communication. This study makes no exception even though

completing written assignments is an important part of teacher education. However, the focus on ELF in this study was to learn about the complexities, synergies and ways of co-constructing communication in naturally occurring teaching situations that also include unplanned discussions between the teacher and students and among students. As international teacher education is a new setting, it is important to find out about teachers' and students' adaptation to using ELF in such a context and the following research question is set for this study:

*How do student teachers and teacher educators accommodate to the use of English as a lingua franca as teaching language in international teacher education?*

## 4 CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY

The Finnish education system has been viewed with great curiosity around the world in recent years, mainly due to the excellent results that Finnish 15-year-old students have reached for example in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies since 2000 (e.g. Niemi, Toom, & Kallioniemi, 2012). Although the performance of Finnish students' has declined in the last round of assessments (OECD, 2014) and the success of the Finnish education system has also been challenged (e.g. Heller Sahlgren, 2015), the reputation of the Finnish schools and teachers continues to be reflected in the hundreds of international individuals and delegations who visit the departments of teacher education and schools in Finland each year. The international interest in Finnish education has also attracted a growing number of international students to study in Finland (Garam & Korkala, 2013). Finland is the leading country in Europe (among 28 EU and EFTA countries where English is not the standard medium of education) based on the number of EMI programmes compared to the number of higher education institutions (Maiworm & Wächter, 2014).

### 4.1 Background of this study

Teacher education in Finland has traditionally been offered in the two national languages of Finnish and Swedish (about 5.3% of Finnish citizens are Swedish-speakers; Statistics Finland, 2014). In the Strategic Plan for the University of Helsinki 2010–2012 (University of Helsinki, 2009), an international dimension was regarded as an essential component of all activities. It was in this frame that initial plans to design an English-medium teacher education programme were formed and developed in the Department of Teacher Education (Hildén, Hotti, Juuti, Kankaanrinta, Kuoppala, Lampiselkä, & Peltonen, 2009). Preliminary surveys conducted among university students highlighted an interest and demand for an international programme that would both make teacher education accessible to non-Finnish speakers and combine Finnish and international students studying in a joint programme. Students considered internationalization in teacher education as an important factor to widen their perspectives and prepare them for multicultural situations in today's schools (Kuoppala, 2012).

When the planning and development for the Subject Teacher Education Programme in English (STEP) started in 2009 and when the programme was officially launched in 2011, it was not expected to simply be a smooth adoption process where every actor knows his/her own role in the programme that consists of many courses that resemble a patchwork. This EMI subject teacher education programme was the first of its kind in Finland (Hildén et al., 2009). I began this PhD



study at the same time with the launching of STEP. Although the programme was preceded by pilot courses in English, it was understood that a more thorough investigation and development would be needed in the first years to make the programme functional. As part of accommodating to English as a lingua franca, international programmes require particular attention to intercultural issues. The University of Helsinki Language Policy states:

Increasing and developing teaching in English are part of the effort to create an international learning environment. This supports the presence of different values, worldviews and argumentation traditions in teaching. The cultural dimension and inter-cultural interaction will be integrated into teaching, supervision and guidance and services. (University of Helsinki, 2014, p. 49)

Although the Language Policy mentions the integration of the cultural dimension and intercultural interaction into teaching, it does not specify nor describe what these are. This kind of discourse is expected of international universities but too often the discourse stays on the level of lofty promises that are not explained, realized or implemented in practice (e.g. Jenkins, 2007, 2011, 2014).

## **4.2 English as teaching language at the University of Helsinki**

The Finnish Ministry of Education (and Culture) (2009) calls for universities in Finland to require lecturers to demonstrate their language proficiency in a foreign language to ensure high-quality education. The University of Helsinki Language Policy from 2007 (University of Helsinki, 2007, p. 46), in effect until 2014, stated that all university teachers were language teachers and they should promote high-quality language usage by their own example. This was a high aim and possibly put much responsibility and pressure on all university lecturers teaching especially in a language other than their first language. However, the University does not have official requirements for university lecturers' English (or other foreign language) skills, although language competence requirements are in place for students entering English-medium programmes. Nevertheless, according to the Language Policy (University of Helsinki, 2007, p. 42), "the university seeks to ensure that the language used in [...] teaching is rich and comprehensible." The revised Language Policy, published in the fall of 2014, is much more careful in its promises and states that "[t]he University focuses particular attention on the quality of the Finnish, Swedish and English used in studies, teaching, and theses and dissertations" (University of Helsinki, 2014, p. 50). As no language proficiency evaluation was or is available for university teachers, it is not known to what extent or even whether the university's language policy is implemented. This challenge is not only unique to the University of Helsinki or Finland (e.g. in the Nordic countries: Airey, Lauridsen, Räsänen, Salö, & Schwach, 2015; in China: Hu & Lei, 2014). The university language centre offers support to EMI teachers in the form

of specialized language courses for English-medium instruction. These can be important for one's professional development but there may not be other incentives for participation. Thus, it is still not clear how the University intends to guard the quality of any language used in teaching.

### 4.3 Subject teacher education in Finland

Subject teacher education is offered in eleven universities or higher education institutions in Finland, mostly in Finnish. Åbo Akademi is responsible for Swedish-medium subject teacher education although a part of the programme can also be carried out at the University of Helsinki. In Finland all qualified<sup>4</sup> teachers are educated with a Master's degree (Finnish National Board of Education, henceforth FNBE, 1998, 2005). Subject teachers are qualified by the completion of studies of their teaching subject in the subject departments and the pedagogical studies in a department of teacher education. Either within the Master's degree or in addition, subject teachers must have a requisite amount of subject studies in their teaching subject. In order to be a qualified subject teacher in the comprehensive school (basic education, Grades 1 to 9, students of the ages 7–16), a person must have completed 60 ECTS<sup>5</sup> credits of subject studies. To be a qualified subject teacher in the upper secondary school (students of the ages 16–19) in Finland, a person must have completed at least 120 ECTS credits in one teaching subject and, if applicable, at least 60 credits in any additional teaching subjects. Subject teachers must also have completed 60 ECTS credits of teachers' pedagogical studies.

Language competence for teachers is also regulated<sup>6</sup> (FNBE, 1998, 2005; Palmenia, 2007). In order to be qualified to teach in the comprehensive school, teachers must possess an excellent competence of the teaching language of the school (usually Finnish or Swedish). 'Excellent' refers to level C2, the highest level out of six levels in CEFR<sup>7</sup> (Council of Europe, 2001). In upper secondary education teachers are required to 'master' the teaching language and what 'mastering' equates to is determined by the employer. In mother tongue studies at any school level an excellent command of the language is required. There are also schools that follow the Finnish curricula but teach part or all of the lessons in another

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<sup>4</sup> The qualification requirements for teaching personnel are stipulated in Decree No. 986/1998 and the amendment to the previous decree, Decree No. 865/2005; FNBE, 1998, 2005)

<sup>5</sup> One (1) ECTS credit equals about 27 hours of student work.

<sup>6</sup> The regulations are stipulated in the same decrees as for the general qualifications (Decree 986/1998, Decree 865/2005; FNBE, 1998, 2005; Palmenia, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> CEFR is the Common European Framework of Reference that was established as a calibrating instrument to help align language proficiency levels in Europe; Council of Europe, 2001).

language (e.g. so-called bilingual education). For such cases, the language competence requirements for teachers are different from teaching in Finnish or Swedish. In bilingual<sup>8</sup> basic education (in languages other than Finnish), teachers' language competence is determined at level C1 (the second highest level out of six levels in CEFR). The international schools<sup>9</sup> in Finland may have their own requirements for teachers' language competence.

Research on multicultural education has been carried out in Finnish universities since the late 1990's—after migration to Finland increased—but it became part of subject teacher education much more recently. The research has centred on multicultural contexts of education and competences needed for teaching diverse students (e.g. Jokikokko, 2005; Paavola, 2007; Räsänen, 2002; Soilamo, 2008; Talib, 1999, 2005). At the University of Helsinki, it was not until 2010 that multicultural education was included in subject teacher education as a separate study unit, and even then only as a 1-credit course. With a change in degree requirements for years 2012–16, a larger course unit of 6 ECTS combined special education and multicultural education and group work<sup>10</sup> (each 2 ECTS).

In Finland teachers are free to choose and apply for teaching positions in any school in any area of the country, and schools are free to make up subject teaching positions with a selection of one to three subjects that suits their needs (Sahlberg, 2015). Permanent positions must be publicly announced and hiring decisions are made by the education provider, who in practice is usually the principal of the school. New subject teachers in Finland most often work shorter temporary or fixed-term positions before they manage to secure permanent employment. Only a minority of new Finnish teacher graduates—one out of five new subject teachers—sign a contract for permanent full-time position immediately (Rautopuro, Tuominen, & Puhakka, 2011). Differences between areas (and subjects) exist, of course, and competition for positions tends to be the greatest in the capital area. New teachers may cover for example a parental or sick leave and start their careers by substituting in different schools while accumulating teaching experience.

#### **4.4 Subject Teacher Education Programme in English (STEP)**

The focus of this PhD study is on the Subject Teacher Education Programme in English (STEP), and the programme is detailed in this and the next sub-section. All the five sub-studies have been conducted within STEP. Application to all teacher education programmes is through an entrance exam. The entrance exam

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<sup>8</sup> 'Bilingual education' refers to basic education within a mainstream Finnish school where a foreign language is used for all or part of the teaching.

<sup>9</sup> 'International school' is used here as a loose term to refer to schools in Finland where the main teaching language is other than Finnish or Swedish.

<sup>10</sup> From fall 2016 on, the group work part will be reduced to 1 ECTS.

to STEP consists of a text-based interview<sup>11</sup> and the annual intake of students is currently set at 25 students. Students apply with either an Arts or a Science subject as their teaching subject. The STEP subjects for the 2015–16 academic year in the Arts group are English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Swedish as the second national language, and philosophy<sup>12</sup>. The subjects in the Science group are mathematics, chemistry and physics. Previously psychology, history, social studies, religion, geography and biology have also been options. STEP studies comprise basic and intermediate studies in Education. The degree requirements state that:

The objective of this programme is to equip students with a preparedness to independently act as a subject teacher and educator. During the programme, students combine content knowledge, educational knowledge, subject didactic knowledge (i.e. knowledge of how to teach, study, and learn the subject), and knowledge about school practices into their own personal practical theories. The purpose of the research-based programme is to help the future teacher to develop into a professional in the planning, implementation, evaluation, and development of teaching. ([www.helsinki.fi/teachereducation/step](http://www.helsinki.fi/teachereducation/step))

STEP students are also highly encouraged to complete the studies in one year and, as teacher studies are quite demanding, not work alongside.

#### **4.5 STEP in the framework of mainstream subject teacher education**

Although STEP is based on the mainstream subject teacher education programme in the same department, there are specific differences from it as well. The backgrounds of the students in each STEP cohort are more diverse than in the Finnish side as the programme admits both domestic and international students. Although nationality or ethnicity is not a determinant in admittance to the programme, there is a desire each year to get a mixed group of domestic and international students. In the first STEP years the students have originated from Finland, elsewhere in Europe, North and South America, Asia and Africa. Language is obviously another major difference between the programmes (see discussion on English as a lingua franca in Section 3). Teacher education in STEP is taught in a foreign language instead of the first language of most of the participants. Furthermore, STEP offers an environment where future teachers of both humanities and science subjects study together and have an opportunity to search for common interests and create learning environments across disciplines and subjects (see e.g. Keeves, Burley, & Alagumalai, 2013). Increased transdisciplinarity is one of the chal-

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<sup>11</sup> In a text-based interview, the interviewee is given a text (related to teaching in general or the subject to be taught) to read prior to the interview. Part of the interview then deals with the applicant's views and understanding of the text.

<sup>12</sup> From fall 2016, philosophy will no longer be available as a STEP subject.

lenges of STEP but also an opportunity. Teacher educators teaching student teachers of mixed subject backgrounds in the programme are challenged to stretch their own viewpoints in not only looking at teaching from the perspective of their own subject but also of others as well. Each teacher is responsible for a piece in the puzzle but it requires sensible and structured planning as a cooperative group of teachers to make it a coherent whole (Biggs & Tang, 2011). As new ways of teaching and providing new types of active learning environments to students in schools are called for of teachers in the new Finnish national curricula for 2016 (FNBE, 2014), the departments of teacher education must also react and respond to this demand by revisiting their often traditional ways of teaching student teachers.

In the mainstream programme, the subject didactics courses are taught in the subject groups: i.e. the mathematicians study separately in their groups, the language teachers on their own, and the chemists in their own group. In STEP, the division is only made into the Arts and Science groups and only for a part of the subject didactics courses. This changes the nature of teaching in the groups somewhat, as the session content is often more general than subject-specific. This type of versatile subject didactics has its demands on the teacher educator who may have to step out of his/her comfort zone in taking into account student teachers whose teaching subject is other than the teacher educator's own background. Although a certain amount of subject-specificity is yet retained, the purpose of the transdisciplinary sessions is to take a wider perspective into subject teaching and integrative learning. Students are challenged to look at the topics, on the one hand, from their subject's perspective and, on the other hand, from a more holistic view that connects the teaching and learning of their own subject to that of the other subjects.

As STEP only admits 25 students, there are no mass lectures of hundreds of students (which exist in the Finnish programme side) but teaching is mostly conducted in small groups that emphasize interaction, group work and input from the students. This enables the teacher to give more personalized teaching but it challenges the teacher to also involve those students who are outside their own subject specialty. International exchange students are also incorporated into some of the STEP courses. As each course is taught by more than one teacher educator, it demands careful cooperation between teachers across the subjects to ensure that the objectives, teaching and learning methods, and assessment strategies are constructively aligned at the course and programme levels (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Another major difference in STEP is that students come into the programme with the intention of completing the studies in one year. In the Finnish side students may break up their teacher education studies into several periods and years. Having the whole cohort complete all studies together is easier and more streamlined from an administrative and teaching perspective but it may also benefit the students as they have time to build a community and thus give and receive peer support in their studies throughout the year.

## 5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As a summary of the previous discussions, this PhD study sets out to examine certain factors that distinguish an international English-medium teacher education programme from mainstream teacher education programmes. International teacher education is understood in this context as a programme that includes both domestic and international students who originate from different geographical, linguistic, educational and cultural backgrounds and who are not all familiar with the local school system. Additionally, the international teacher education programme is mostly taught by local teacher educators who have themselves been educated in the local context. As students become qualified in the local school system, its particular educational policies and aims are an important focus point during teacher education. By gathering data about student teachers' and teacher educators' adjustment, experiences and conceptions about and toward multiculturalism and English as a lingua franca, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate the roles that these factors play in implementing an international subject teacher education programme within the context of local (teacher) education. The five sub-studies examine the phenomena from different perspectives and aim at highlighting issues that are important for research-based development of teacher education. The research questions are formulated as the following:

1. How does multiculturalism manifest itself and how is interculturality constituted and negotiated in teaching and learning in an international teacher education programme? (Publications I, II & IV)
2. How do student teachers and teacher educators accommodate to the use of English as a lingua franca as teaching language in international teacher education? (Publications III & IV)

A central issue of internationalizing teacher education is the employability of its graduates. The inclusion of immigrant teachers in local schools is seen in this study as an intercultural phenomenon. In order to examine how an international teacher education programme serves the employment opportunities of international students and to investigate whether additional support systems should be in place within and outside the institution, the following research question is set:

3. What considerations do immigrant<sup>13</sup> teacher education graduates have of their employability in the host country? (Publication V)

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<sup>13</sup> 'Immigrant' refers to graduates who were born outside of Finland, did not have Finnish as first language and who had moved to Finland as adults. See also Section 7.4.

## 6 METHODS

This section summarizes the methodological solutions of this dissertation and their limitations.

### 6.1 Summary of the methodological solutions

This qualitative dissertation consists of separate but interrelated sub-studies (Publications I, II, II, IV and V) that were conducted during the first years of the Subject Teacher Education Programme (STEP). Data has been collected each year by either interviews, questionnaires and/or course work from the student teachers and/or teacher educators (see Table 1 below). As the main objective has been research-based development of teacher education, the different studies have all been part of a larger framework of developmental work that has enabled the examination of contents and solutions chosen for particular courses. Feedback and research results have been disseminated, besides the publications, in planning meetings among the teacher educators. The research findings, unlike administrative documents/reports, will help better justify to teacher educators certain developmental needs and challenges in the programme and raise discussion and awareness about developmental opportunities.

This study has employed qualitative research methods with which the researcher relies on the views of the participants, and the data is collected largely in words and texts. In comparison to quantitative research, in qualitative research the researcher's own views may be more visible and s/he has to make choices in selecting and presenting the data, and be aware of his/her own biases (Creswell, 2008). In the beginning of each year, I have asked the students to fill out and sign a consent form for gathering feedback and data, if they have so agreed. I have also informed the students that they "can, at any time, retract this consent regarding a certain piece of the course/programme or certain piece of research data" (quote from the consent form; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The students and teachers have also been informed that participation was voluntary and any published research will have the participants as anonymous. All of the publications used pseudonyms for the participants' names and even if the participants were the same in more than one publication, I have used different pseudonyms so that the likelihood of someone being identified is decreased.

**Table 1.** A summary of the main aims, participants, data collection and analysis in Publications I–V.

PUBLICATION	MAIN AIMS	PARTICIPANTS	DATA COLLECTION	ANALYSIS
I	To find out how student teachers and teacher educators approached the issue of interculturality and what conceptions they had of others in the multicultural context.	11 student teachers  11 teacher educators	Individual semi-structured interviews	Discursive pragmatics
II	To understand how a learning portfolio supports the development of student teachers intercultural competences.	3 student teachers	Focus group  Student essays	Discursive pragmatics
III	To find out how the participants perceived the use of ELF and how they experienced the situations where communication problems arose.	11 student teachers  11 teacher educators	Individual semi-structured interviews	Thematic analysis
IV	To argue that both students and teachers in EMI programs need to step out of their own frames of reference in order to negotiate the meaning of different contexts and successfully find common ground for mutual intelligibility and individual learning.	6 student teachers  1 teacher educator	10 min excerpt from a videoed and voice recorded lecture	Qualitative content analysis
V	To find factors that promote or hinder employment opportunities for immigrant teachers educated in the host country.	16 immigrant teachers in two annual cohorts	Focus group  Online questionnaire	Qualitative content analysis



## 6.2 Participants

The participants in the sub-studies of this PhD dissertation were either only student teachers or both student teachers and teacher educators in the international Subject Teacher Education Programme. The student teachers include both domestic and international students. The international students have either moved to Finland permanently or they have come to Finland for a shorter term, for example to study in the university, and plan to move abroad later. All student teachers in STEP are either Bachelor or Master level degree students in the University of Helsinki or they are completing the teacher education studies on top of a previously acquired Master's degree.

The participants for the studies in Publication I and III were both student teachers and teacher educators. I sent email requests to all students (in total 14, from Europe, Asia, South and North America) and teachers to participate in the study. In the end 11 students and 11 teachers consented to participating in the study (Publications I and III). The students were of various L1s, with a small minority of English native speakers. Most of the teachers were Finnish and Finnish L1 speakers.

The participants of the study in Publication II were three students of the STEP programme who completed a learning portfolio as part of their course work. They formed a pre-assigned group for one of the learning tasks (components of the learning portfolio). All students in the particular year completed the learning portfolio and the group of three students was selected arbitrarily for the study.

The participants for the study in Publication IV were six students and the lecturer of a pilot class a year prior to the formal start of STEP. The pilot class consisted of a diverse body of students (both Finnish and international) who were Bachelor, Master and PhD students at the University of Helsinki. The participants were English speakers from the Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles of Englishes (Kachru, 1986; see Section 3.1).

The participants in the study for Publication V were immigrant graduates (born outside of Finland, did not have Finnish as first language, and moved to Finland as adults) from the first two years of STEP. Seven graduates in the first cohort and nine graduates in the second cohort consented to participating in the study.

## 6.3 Data collection

This PhD study used different data collection methods from different participants in different years in order to gain a more rounded and holistic picture of the different aspects of the international teacher education programme (see Table 1 above). In the initial phases of STEP, it seemed appropriate to conduct individual interviews with the student teachers and teacher educators in order to learn as much as possible about their experiences of studying and teaching in the new EMI

teacher education programme (Publications I and III). I interviewed each informant approximately half-way through the study year. I used a framework of pre-formulated questions but the interviews were semi-structured (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 361) and not all students or teachers were asked exactly the same set of questions or in the same order. Each interview thus advanced differently based on the interviewee's answers or reactions as follow-up questions were produced based on the earlier answers. The student interviews lasted about 30 minutes, and the teacher interviews about one hour. The topics focused on the interviewees' perceptions of approaching and dealing with the multicultural learning environment (Publication I) and the English as a lingua franca setting (Publication III). I later transcribed the interviews to facilitate thorough data analysis. The main benefits of using interview as the research method were that it offered possibilities to interpret how the multicultural learning environment was serving the different participants and how multiculturalism was constructed in the participants' discourses (Publication I), and what aspects of the ELF context the participants considered important (Publication III).

In the second year I decided to opt for a different data gathering method where the researchers' presence would not be such an influence or interference as it may be in interviews. The data in the study for Publication II was derived from student teachers' course work in the subject teacher education programme. My co-author and I gave the student teachers a learning portfolio of intercultural competences (PICSTEP) to work on during one course about multicultural education and the two practices included in the study year. The items collected as data were components of the portfolio. The students also composed together a 30-minute focus group discussion about issues related to and discussed in the multicultural education lectures (given by my co-author) that they had attended earlier with the whole cohort. Before the focus group, I divided the students into groups of three or four students with the goal of mixing students from different backgrounds and different disciplines. After setting up the recorders for the focus group session and giving short instructions and suggestions for topics, both on paper and orally, I then left the students alone so that we could ensure the least amount of interference. Later I transcribed the focus group discussion. The data for this study also included the same three students' essays, written after the multicultural education lectures, reflecting on their own five memorable multicultural stories that they had previously experienced and written down before the course started.

In order to take a deeper look into an ELF situation, I collected and analyzed data from audio and video recording during one of the pilot courses organized during the year prior to the formal launching of STEP (Publication IV). The study investigated an excerpt of a session that was part of a video and voice corpus that consisted in total of 41 two-hour sessions, 70% of the course sessions in a month's time. The excerpt in scrutiny was drawn from the first day of teaching, the last ten

(10) minutes of a session. I chose the particular excerpt as data for this study because it was from the very end of the first day of teaching when the students were not yet familiar with each other's backgrounds or accents. The participants in the excerpt were engaged in a discussion about an ethical dilemma related to student assessment.

For Publication V my co-author and I gathered data about the immigrant graduates' employment situations and perceptions of their employability in Finland. The research methods were an online questionnaire and a focus group discussion. I sent requests to the graduates in the first two cohorts to fill out the online questionnaire approximately one year after graduation. In the first part of data collection, I sent the questionnaire to the first cohort graduates; about a year later in the third part of data collection, I sent a similar questionnaire to the second cohort graduates. The questionnaires included background questions related to for example the teachers' language skills, reasons for moving to Finland, time lived in Finland, and educational and employment history. In open-ended questions the respondents were able to describe their experiences of job search in more detail. We encouraged the respondents to share both successful and unsuccessful job search stories. The second part of data collection, which was two focus group discussions, took place after the first questionnaire round. Each focus group had one teacher graduate from the first cohort and two student teachers from the second cohort, one month away from graduating. After oral and written instructions, we left the informants alone for the focus group discussion so that interference from the researchers would be minimized. The participants could thus more freely focus on such issues that they considered the most significant about their employment situations, experiences and expectations of job search and job securement.

## **6.4 Data analysis**

The various data were analyzed using different qualitative data analysis methods, depending on the type and purpose of the data.

### **6.4.1 Discursive pragmatics**

Along with my co-authors, we used discursive pragmatics as the method of data analysis in the studies for Publication I and Publication II. Inspired by French linguistics, Dervin (2008, as cited in Suomela-Salmi & Dervin, 2009; 2009, as cited in Dervin, 2011a) has since 2008 proposed that a method like discursive pragmatics is a well-suited tool for looking into intercultural data that is characterized by being dialogic, discursive, argumentative, contextual, ideological and multivoiced (Suomela-Salmi & Dervin, 2009, pp. 246–247; see also Marková, Linell, Grossen, & Salazar, 2007). Discursive pragmatics is an interdisciplinary

and intertheoretical discourse analysis approach that allows to “investigate empirical data of language-related actions and processes without losing sight of the various contextual layers that play a role in these actions and processes” (Zienkowski, 2011, p. 7). Intercultural data contain a multiplicity of voices that are being co-constructed, manipulated, (re)presented and silenced in interaction (Dervin, 2011a, p. 40). Because of the heterogeneity and instability of discourses, instead of taking discourse at face-value, it is important to look beyond the surface level of discourse and consider it in the momentary nature of contexts and spaces (Dervin, 2013, p. 25).

In Publication I, I first read through the interview transcripts multiple times and selected certain excerpts that revealed the participants’ implicit and explicit conceptions of the intercultural. To ensure trustworthiness, my co-author validated the interpretations by reviewing the transcripts and deliberating on the chosen excerpts and the positions and strategies found in them. As discourse is always unstable and heterogeneous, we considered it important to search for latent themes (see Braun & Clarke, 2006), and look beyond the face-value of what was being said. We made a deliberate effort to reveal the participants’ implicit and explicit conceptions of the intercultural by comparing and contrasting their discourses (Dervin, 2011a). We analyzed the data in terms of how the interviewees positioned themselves and other participants in the context of the multicultural programme and how the used strategies influenced their approaches in intercultural encounters. While paying particular attention to any contradictions in the participants’ discourses, my co-author and I combed the data and searched for referential strategies (i.e. what identities speakers claimed to themselves, and how they talked of others) and argumentation strategies (i.e. what kind of arguments were given, how were perspectives presented). We then grouped the referential and argumentation strategies into positioning strategies that constituted the participants’ initial responses to multiculturalism (Publication I).

In the study for Publication II, my co-author and I used discursive pragmatics to analyze the PICSTEP focus group discussions and essays. With discursive pragmatics we analyzed the data by looking for hidden and unexpressed voices, referential strategies (what kind of ‘authorities’ were mentioned, how people were named and referred to, and what group memberships were claimed), and argumentation strategies (what kind of arguments were given, how were perspectives presented) (Zienkowski, Östman, & Verschueren, 2011). We identified these components by a variety of linguistic elements such as deictics (markers of person, time and space such as personal pronouns, adverbs and verbs), utterance modalities (adverbs, shifters, etc.), and nouns as they can serve as indicators of the speakers’ attitude toward another person, an entity or a phenomenon (Dervin, 2013). Both of us authors read through the transcripts and essays first independently and selected extracts that brought out the students’ understanding of the intercultural

and their reflections of their personal development in it. Afterward we compared our analyses in order to find consensus.

#### **6.4.2 Thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method “for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). My co-authors and I used thematic analysis to analyze the student and teacher interviews in the study for Publication III. The purpose of the analysis was to reflect reality, to be able to report on the participants’ experiences and meanings and the reality of what it was like for the teacher educators and student teachers to teach and study in English in the international teacher education programme (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). With this method I first combed through the transcriptions and coded the data and selected items that seemed interesting and/or important. This process was iterative as I searched for recurring themes to find the participants’ perceptions of the ELF strategies that they had employed, and the effect of those strategies in incidents where communication breakdown was either detected or endeavoured to be avoided. Afterwards in successive readings with my two co-authors, we modified and refined the themes together until we reached the final thematic foci. These themes were not necessarily the same as the interview questions had been. We extracted the themes from the participants’ shared experiences and perceptions of what it was like to teach and study in the EMI programme. The analysis went beyond the semantic level (the surface meanings of the data) to the interpretation of the themes and their implications in light of previous research in the educational context. The main themes related to the participants’ experiences of using ELF in the academic context and to their ways of collaboration in co-constructing communication.

#### **6.4.3 Qualitative content analysis**

Different types of qualitative content analysis were used for the studies in Publication IV and V. The data in Publication IV was the 10-minute extract from a teaching session and it included negotiations of meanings and contexts. I analyzed the discussion qualitatively step by step, one line at a time. I first transcribed the excerpt (with the help of a colleague) with a broad transcription method that I considered suitable as the purpose was not to concentrate on ‘deviations’ from a ‘standard’ form of English but to understand how communication is a situated practice and requires continual contextualization (Baird, Baker, & Kitazawa, 2014). Afterward I analyzed the discussion qualitatively to understand the procedures that the participants used and shared in the interaction in order to further common understanding (Liddicoat, 2009). With the method of analysis I looked

both for the strategies used in co-constructing meaning and context, and how intelligibility was gradually reached in the discussion. The analysis enabled the identification of strategies that the speakers engaged in and that are helpful to ELF talk, and also illuminated the turning points that became evident as mutual intelligibility was achieved through the negotiation of the different experiences and contexts.

In the study for Publication V about the immigrant STEP students' perceptions of their employability in Finland, the online questionnaire responses and focus group discussions were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. My co-author and I employed an inductive approach to qualitative content analysis. We first studied the data independently and searched for emerging patterns and general themes in the responses and transcripts. We then discussed and compared our findings together. We reduced the data into a summary form, grouped and abstracted through the use of categories that we formulated out of the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). In order to get beyond the surface level of the data, we found it important to learn to understand and find explanations for the teachers' employment situations. Thus we paid attention to not only what the teachers said, but how they said it, and why they said it. In the final stage we grouped the factors that the teachers perceived as hindrances and/or aids to their employment situation in the host country and sorted them into the final categories.

## 6.5 Limitations of the research methods

Some of the limitations of the study relate to the research methods used. In the beginning of the research process I felt that one-on-one interviews were beneficial as I could glean a lot of information from the respondents. Sometimes an interviewee can also feel more at ease and share for example more sensitive issues when s/he can do so in confidence without others present. However, interviews can also have their drawbacks. It is sometimes difficult to formulate questions in such a way that they are open-ended enough so that they do not lead or prod the interviewee to answer in a certain way. As an interviewer I also had to try keep my own prejudices and perceptions aside in order not to influence the respondent's answers (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). However, it is impossible to be completely neutral and power differences (e.g. language choice) can also influence the situation (Holmes, Fay, Andrews, & Attia, 2013).

For Publications I and III, a more structured interview would have undoubtedly brought more information and insight in a limited number of chosen questions and better comparison between the respondents' views. However, allowing the interviewees to bring up their own topics brought in viewpoints that can be considered important to each individual, and thus relevant to the context and the participants' experiences. The interviews were conducted only at one point in time whereas two or more interviews at different phases of the programme would have provided

more detailed and different data. It can be argued that in qualitative research, quantity is not relevant as the aim is not to generalize (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). However, it is also important to keep in mind that discourse is unstable and thus people may give different information from one moment to another, and with different interlocutors (Dervin, 2013). Their experiences and understandings may change. Thus interviewing even the same people at different times may give variations and developments in the understanding of conceptions and phenomena.

The study in Publication II dealt with just three students' assignments as research data. We considered the study a case study that was a preliminary exploration into the students' perceptions and into the impact of the work on intercultural competences in our context. In order to reach more comprehensive findings of the divergence or similarity of students' conceptions of the intercultural and the development of intercultural competences, it would be important to use data from the whole cohort so that variations in students' development could be better investigated, and to also assess the quality of the course.

Although utmost care was taken in the study for Publication IV, the transcript was not an objective account of the actual discussion. The excerpt as such can also not be taken as a model of an ELF situation as each context is different and dependent on the participants' input and knowledge. However, the excerpt is a genuine look into an ELF situation in multicultural teacher education in which the participants were not yet familiar with each other's accents, experiences or backgrounds. As a researcher I had to make my own interpretations of the interaction and the strategies undertaken in the discussion (text, with video as aid) to decipher the meaning of the different turn-takings and actions in class (Liddicoat, 2009).

The limitations of Publication V include that data were collected from only two cohorts of students and not every graduate participated. Gathering data with a questionnaire can also be limiting as the participants may respond to the questionnaire in a haste. For triangulation of data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 141), two different methods were used and this increased the richness of data and improved the possibility to better compare and contest the participants' responses. Nevertheless, the study only examined the teachers' perspectives as job seekers and not for example the principals' perceptions as the ones making the decisions to hire. In addition, in order to receive more reliable and longitudinal data, the study should have spanned longer in order to gather data from several years. However, one of the aims of the study was to find out the graduates' experiences and perceptions of job search soon after graduating. Job search and perceptions of the hiring process are very personal experiences as the outcome depends on many factors of which formal qualifications are only one aspect.

## 7 DISCUSSION

This dissertation deals with the development of an international English-medium subject teacher education programme and the roles of the specific factors that differentiate it from mainstream subject teacher education programmes: international and multicultural teaching and learning environment and the use of English as a lingua franca in a local transdisciplinary context. This section will discuss the main findings of the study, implications and recommendations of the study, ethical considerations, and suggestions for further research.

### 7.1 Main findings of the study

The five sub-studies provide different perspectives to the research questions. Further details about the sub-studies are available in the original Publications (I–V). The main findings—divided by the research questions—are discussed in the following.

#### 7.1.1 Manifestations of multiculturalism in international teacher education (*Publications I, II & IV*)

This section provides answers to the first research question:

*How does multiculturalism manifest itself and how is interculturality constituted and negotiated in teaching and learning in an international teacher education programme?*

Multiculturalism manifested itself in a variety of ways in teaching and learning situations in the international teacher education programme. It was realized as different strategies to position oneself in relation to others, different needs for communication, and either more or at times less cognizant reflections of situations and contexts. Interculturality was constituted and negotiated through discourses and through applications of a wider understanding produced by reflection. Publications I, II, and IV all dealt with the themes of multiculturalism and interculturality in the international subject teacher education from various perspectives. Publication I examined how student teachers and teacher educators considered multiculturalism, how they had experienced it in the programme, and how they thought multiculturalism should manifest itself in the programme. Publication II explored the effects of a learning portfolio that was created for the purpose of a critical investigation and development of one's own intercultural competences. Publication IV examined the construction of intercultural communication and argued that the variety of diverse backgrounds and experiences should be incorporated into an international teacher education programme.



One of the goals of the Subject Teacher Education Programme (STEP) is to build an authentic learning environment where both Finnish and international students study not only side by side but in meaningful interaction and exploit synergy from the different personal and educational backgrounds. Previous criticism raised toward international programmes claims that international (exchange) students are not always genuinely integrated into the programmes and cooperation is often forced (e.g. Peacock & Harrison, 2009). The integration of students in STEP seemed to be strengthened by the common goal: teaching qualifications. One of the reasons why many Finnish students applied to STEP instead of the mainstream programme was that they wanted to have an opportunity to study in an international, multicultural environment and in smaller transdisciplinary groups. The students emphasized how they built a community and camaraderie among themselves, and a feeling of loyalty and belonging could also be felt in the sessions and interviews (Publications I & III).

For a programme to be genuinely intercultural, however, it is essential that intercultural aspects are integrated into and considered throughout the programme (Seeberg & Minick, 2012). As Publication II proposes as well, intercultural competences are not acquired or developed from merely being ‘international’ and in a multicultural environment (Deardorff, 2011; Dervin, 2010). Thus, the issue of multiculturalism and the goal of creating a coherent intercultural programme are more complex. In Publication I, there was a diversity of opinions from both students and teachers about intercultural aspects and what the multicultural or intercultural in essence are (see also Dervin, Paatela-Nieminen, Kuoppala, & Riitaoja, 2012). There was no consensus of how multiculturalism should be incorporated or how it should manifest itself in the programme. Therefore there was no shared foundation onto which to build and no clear objectives to which to aim (Publication I). The students seemed to consider that different cultures only relate to (foreign) nation-states or ethnicity. Thus, because of the Finnish context, they did not consider Finnish people multicultural. Although many teachers understood the diversity in each student as an individual (whether domestic or international), there was yet hesitation over how to approach multiculturalism in the sessions in order to be sensitive, respectful and not too personal (Assaf, Garza, & Battle, 2010). Some teachers explained the co-construction, contextualization and fluidity of cultures and identities, but stereotypical and culturalist opinions of Others were also present in teacher discourses (Publication I; Yang & Montgomery, 2013). One of the core issues appeared to be the participants’ inability to distinguish between cultural characteristics and individual expressions, which often resulted in stereotyping and othering (Publication I). Learning is not a linear process and it can be complicated to rid oneself of familiar ways, such as using stereotypes or cultures as an explanation for differences or as an excuse for behaviour. This became apparent in Publication II as well. In the discussion and review of their own past behaviour and experiences, the students agreed that people need to watch out

for stereotypes and stereotypical discourses because of the power imbalances that are created. However, the students yet sometimes resorted to stereotypes in explaining their own or others' behaviour (Publication II).

Sometimes students distanced themselves in order to establish a position in relation to a group of people (Publication I). A student may have felt free to position him/herself differently but failed to recognize that others have this right as well. This at times resulted in a situation where a student for example described him/herself to be different from a negative stereotype but assumed others to be similar to the stereotype. Thus a student allowed him/herself to have a fluid identity but defined the identity of the Other as fixed. The students in Publication II shared stories of how others had been surprised (and even disappointed) that they did not fit the stereotype that was attached to people from their country of origin.

In Publication I, some participants explicitly sought to verbalize experiences in the multicultural context in order to make sense of them. Many teachers emphasized that cultural differences should be appreciated and respected—however, these conceptions were rarely critically questioned. Only one teacher brought up her concern that the ideas and opinions that are against equitable education should be exposed during teacher education so that they can be critically discussed. In Publication II, the students were specifically asked to verbalize their experiences and consider their conceptions of multiculturalism. Although the students seemed hesitant in using certain concepts related to multiculturalism (for example 'culture'), there was yet a level of reflexivity in their discourses. They seemed to have been deeply affected by the critical multicultural lectures that they had attended and they were trying to sort out how they understood the multicultural concepts and how they should use them. The students had come to understand that all people have stereotypical beliefs regarding 'us' and 'others,' and that there are different kinds of power relations that come into play in intercultural communication. In Publication IV, an international student brought up an ethical dilemma from his home context that related to student assessment and to which he had been exposed. Although linguistic challenges played a role in the discussion, it was also the 'foreignness' and unfamiliarity of the dilemma that made it difficult for many of the others, including the teacher, to understand.

The explicit acknowledgement of multiculturalism was sometimes considered to work against the good intentions (Publication I). Some teachers and international students pointed out that they did not want multicultural issues to be brought up excessively in the sessions as they worried that overemphasized multiculturalism could hamper interaction. Some international students were perhaps concerned about overemphasizing multiculturalism because multiculturalism for them was simply about the foreignness and they feared being othered. Many teachers agreed that multiculturalism should come through in discussions in the sessions and that students should be given possibilities to share experiences from their cultural backgrounds, schools and education. However, some teachers

wanted to downplay multiculturalism. This was because they seemed worried of being judgmental of the international students or of concentrating excessively on the differences originating from the foreignness instead of the diversity within each individual.

In Publication I the student teachers seemed to be unaware of the importance of relating their multicultural experiences to their future work as teachers and analyzing any challenges through the 'lenses' of a professional teacher. The diverse experiences and conceptions were usually considered simply interesting, exotic and enriching content in the sessions (cf. Kumaravadivelu, 2008). Thus the opportunities were bypassed to challenge prior beliefs in order to make way for renewed conceptualisations of experiences that could eventually be transferred to the participants' own teaching (Liu & Milman, 2010; Löfström & Poom-Valickis, 2013; Yang & Montgomery, 2013). Likewise, the teacher educators seemed not to take advantage of the learning potential in intercultural encounters in terms of encouraging student teachers to connect their experiences to their future work as teachers (Publication I). In Publication IV, it was eventually the students, instead of the teacher, who took charge in relating the issue at hand to their future role as teachers and the local context. As moments in sessions are fleeting and time constraints are always present, it can be also be challenging for teachers to know when an issue needs more discussion or clarification. Students thus need support and encouragement to become self-directed and reflexive in bringing up and considering meaningful experiences that will help develop and reconstruct their conceptions about learning and teaching. This needs to be more pronounced in international teacher education as some of the students are not familiar with the school system to which they become qualified.

Teaching is ingrained with normative elements that are based on established values. Teachers carry along their own educational and cultural experiences and it is through them that they make sense of their current learning experience (Turner, 2013). Teachers' beliefs and conceptions about equity and equality, social justice, diversity, and discrimination are all intertwined in their actions with students (Toom & Husu, 2012). When student teachers learn to deliberate on their experiences and knowledge in connection with pedagogical theories, they can develop their understanding of the implications and consequences of their actions and discourses with future students (Hawkins, 2004; Husu, Toom, & Patrikainen, 2008). Instead of teaching specific techniques, teacher education needs to support new teachers in developing into critical thinkers who can reflect and critique on their actions and discourses. As Publication I suggests, however, the students as well as teachers lacked a critical understanding of multiculturalism. If teacher educators as experts do not have a sufficiently shared critical understanding of multiculturalism, there is a danger that they promote and pass on culturalist viewpoints to their students, who later on use them with their school students (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006; Gorski, 2009). Furthermore, the objectives, implementation

methods and assessment practices may become arbitrary in the programme if teacher educators send student teachers contradictory messages related to multiculturalism and dealing with diversities. The positive results of the portfolio work showed, however, that by exposing students to critical multicultural perspectives and by having students examine their own discourses and behaviour, they can come to understand how stereotypes and prejudice can completely change one's preconceptions and expectations of people and one's behaviour and actions toward others (Publication II). Teacher educators need opportunities to compare and contest among themselves their conceptions of interculturality so that they have a sufficiently shared understanding of its roles and implications for students' development as teachers (Assaf, Garza, & Battle, 2010; Santoro, 2009).

As schools are increasingly multicultural and the global world increasingly closer to home, it is important for all teachers, irrespective of background and origin, to contest and compare their own perspectives, attitudes and values against those of the others and against critical understandings of multiculturalism. When teachers learn to critique their discourses and behaviours, they can also learn to guide their students to detect stereotypical and other culturalist ideas in their own discourses and actions and those of the others. This study shows that the opportunities of multiculturalism are not always recognized in teaching and learning in teacher education. However, the recognition of these opportunities would be an essential part of constructing interculturality.

### **7.1.2 Accommodating to English as a lingua franca in international teacher education (*Publications III & IV*)**

English as a lingua franca is an integral aspect of international teacher education. It works as the medium of communication across different linguistic, educational and cultural backgrounds. It is thus an important tool for creating interculturality and mutual understanding among the participants of a programme. This section responds to the second research question:

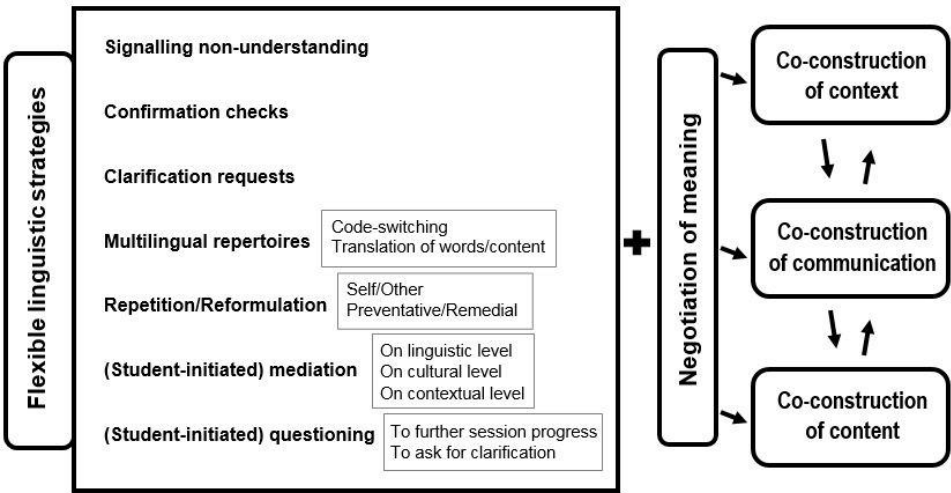
*How do student teachers and teacher educators accommodate to the use of English as a lingua franca as teaching language in international teacher education?*

In this study, student teachers and teacher educators approached English as a lingua franca in various ways and accommodated to its use in different ways as well. While the students came from Kachru's (1986) three circles of Englishes, the teachers belonged to the Expanding Circle. Publications III and IV investigated the use of and accommodation to English as a lingua franca in international teacher education from the perspectives of the teacher educators and student teachers. Publication III gathered interview data of the participants' perceptions of teaching and studying in English as a lingua franca, and Publication IV took a theoretical stance into the construction of shared understanding through analyzing

the use of accommodation strategies in a particular teaching session. The participants had different prior exposure to English as a lingua franca environments, they had different expectations of the kind and level of English used in the programme, and they approached the situations from various standpoints (Publications III & IV). The focus on Publication III was largely on challenges caused by some teacher educators' weaker English skills and ways to overcome these situations. The challenges dealt with in Publication IV arose from student teachers' different kinds of Englishes and diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. The transdisciplinary context also caused some challenges (Publications III & IV). All students were not always knowledgeable in the specialized terminology of a particular teacher educator's area of expertise and the teacher might have not been able to explain content matter in more colloquial language (Publication III; cf. Airey, 2011). Sometimes the diversity and unfamiliarity of cultural or educational backgrounds and contexts demanded more effort to negotiate for meaning in order to achieve mutual intelligibility.

Although the students seemed to value interesting, comprehensible content (Suvinitty, 2010) and flexible communication (Jenkins, 2011), they also reported a fair amount of frustration if a session did not progress due to a teacher's lack of fluency or English proficiency (Publication III; cf. Hu & Lei, 2014). In those cases some students wondered whether they were receiving such high quality education as they should and whether the course requirements were met. For the teacher educator's part, if one felt that his/her English proficiency was lacking, it affected negatively their feeling of being a professional teacher educator (Publication III). In Publication IV it was the diversity of backgrounds, experiences and accents of the students that caused challenges. Similarly to earlier research findings (e.g. Cogo, 2009; Dewey, 2009; Klimpfinger, 2009; Mauranen, 2006), in both studies the participants were resourceful and eager to offer support if someone was struggling, if there was a break-up in communication, or if someone was not being understood. The participants used a variety of flexible accommodation strategies to help the flow of communication and help reach mutual understanding. The accommodation strategies found in Publications III and IV are depicted in Figure 1 below. The students translated words for teachers, asked questions for clarification in L1 after the session and translated information (subject content) to others (Publication III). In order to either help a teacher or a fellow student, the students also engaged in student-initiated mediation and student-initiated questioning in class to help negotiate for meaning and maintain session progress (Publications III & IV). Mediation is an unsolicited interactional strategy where a third party rephrases someone else's speech to co-speaker(s) after a breakdown in communication has happened (Hynninen, 2011). In Publication III, some students engaged in student-initiated mediation during sessions when they voluntarily stepped in to help a teacher when s/he was not able to explain content matter and concepts in understandable terms. In Publication IV, the students offered help by mediating

both language and cultural content by the use of different strategies when the differences in Englishes hindered intelligibility and when the cultural context was not shared. Thus mediation involved not only a linguistic level but cultural and contextual levels as well. In order to understand and negotiate the meaning of the context in question, the participants transferred meaning to the local context and related the issue to teacher education with their own examples (Publication IV). Teachers used code-switching if they could not find the right word or term (Publication III), signalled non-understanding, or used confirmation checks and clarification requests to ensure understanding (Publication IV). Repetition (either self or other), reformulation (rephrasing one’s own speech or paraphrasing someone else’s speech) were also used as strategies to either prevent a misunderstanding or repair after a misunderstanding had happened (Publication IV).



**Figure 1.** A graph depicting the flexible linguistic strategies used to co-construct communication in the EMI programme.

Some teachers seemed better at creating a more effective and engaging learning environment where the co-construction of communication and meaning making with others was encouraged and appreciated. If a teacher was not afraid to admit his/her (occasional) lack of fluency, lack of proficiency or signalled non-understanding, it seemed to be easier to build a climate where students voluntarily offered help and the teacher felt at ease accepting it (Publications III & IV). When the teacher did not own the role as the only expert in the classroom, it activated the students to explain and discuss concepts and issues and thus deepened and enhanced their learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011). It also helped make teaching and learning reciprocal; teachers were not the only ones with knowledge (Publications III & IV). This better resembles the type of teaching environment that the student teachers are expected to lead in schools as well (FNBE, 2014). The findings highlight the importance of making space for the negotiation of meanings and contexts

in multicultural programmes. As participants come to such programmes with a diversity of prior experiences and knowledge, and backgrounds in different educational and linguistic contexts, they may have to work harder to bridge their divergent levels of knowledge and language to reach mutual intelligibility (Smit, 2009). When students were given space to construct their own understanding with the lecturer staying on the sidelines, it gave them an opportunity to develop their conceptions and build their knowledge from a base with which they were familiar (Publication IV). However, the opportunities for teaching about teaching were usually not utilized as the active roles of the students were not openly discussed in the sessions (Publications III & IV; Loughran, 2006). Although an active student role should be the goal in every classroom, the students usually considered that they had simply helped the teacher out (Publication III).

However, the studies suggested that teachers' perceived ability to create a comfortable learning climate helped alleviate power imbalances caused by differences in language proficiency or teacher–student dichotomy (Publications III & IV). Teacher educators need to adopt effective teaching strategies and invite student teachers to participate, not merely to assist the teacher but engage actively to construct knowledge with their peers and further one's own learning. It is also important that all participants in ELF contexts become aware of the ELF principles and adopt flexible accommodation strategies (Dewey 2012; Seidlhofer 2011). Teacher educators should expose their pedagogical thinking and the choices they make in teaching. If their English skills are weaker than those of the student teachers, they can take advantage of the situation by empowering and activating the student teachers, which should also be a goal for the student teachers with their future students.

In international EMI programmes all students and teachers of any origin need to learn to widen their perspectives so that they can look at situations from different angles and other people's positions. Students need sufficient opportunities to relate their prior experiences to the current context and interconnect them with the theoretical knowledge that they are expected to master within teacher education so that they are able to apply the knowledge in relevant and appropriate ways in practice (Johnson, 2006). Although time in sessions is limited, it is important to invite students to share meaningful examples of contextual differences so that different perspectives can be discussed and one's own frames of reference stretched. English as a lingua franca is always connected to individuals' educational and cultural experiences and knowledge bases, and it is one of the factors contributing to a learning environment in an international programme. Simultaneously, the use of ELF and ELF principles are a significant element in constructing or deconstructing power structures in EMI teaching–learning situations.

### 7.1.3 Perceptions of employability in the host country (Publication V)

When an international teacher education is launched, it is also important to consider the employment opportunities of its graduates. Societies in general have become more multicultural through migration in recent decades, but work force has commonly not seen such diversification in equal measures (Fleischmann & Dronkers, 2010). The inclusion of immigrant teachers in the host country schools is viewed in this study as an intercultural phenomenon. It is examined through immigrant teachers' perceptions of their employment opportunities. This section answers to the last research question:

*What considerations do immigrant teacher education graduates have of their employability in the host country?*

The immigrant graduates' perceptions of their employability ranged from positive outlooks to a deep concern of finding permanent work in the host country. The main factor as a hindrance or an aid to gain employment seemed to be language skills, but not only in the local languages. The aim of Publication V was to find out how immigrant graduates from the English-medium subject teacher education fared in establishing themselves in the labour market and how they perceived their employment opportunities in the host country about a year after graduation. Most of the immigrant teachers had gained employment, even permanent or other full-time positions. However, the jobs were mostly in international schools. None of the teachers had secured a position in teaching a mainstream classroom in Finnish-medium basic or upper secondary education. Some of the participants claimed that they had experienced discrimination based on their nationality and some had benefitted from it.

In spite of host country qualifications, almost every teacher mentioned factors that could hinder permanent employment. *The number of teaching subjects* was considered one of the most important factors affecting employment. Most of the teachers were qualified to teach only one subject and many believed that it might hinder them from getting a permanent position. Some students were already concerned of their skills and qualifications and the need to further educate themselves before they had even graduated as teachers but felt restricted by, for example, time and financial constraints. Although the teachers rarely considered their past experience from outside of Finland helpful to gaining current employment, they felt that *references from substitutions*, even during teacher education studies, can be important in securing a job. During substitutions they could start building their networks and get a foot in the door.

The factors that the teachers considered the most significant to gaining employment were *language skills in Finnish* and *'nativeness' particularly in English*. The absence of factors relating to any discrimination based on ethnicity/nationality or other diversities—other than language skills—was noticeable in the data. Native language skills are related to nationality, however, and thus they are a



source of possible discrimination. It appeared that being a native speaker of English or another foreign language was a desired background in the international schools and it seemed to improve employment opportunities (cf. McGinnity & Lunn, 2011). Without native English skills, teachers of English were not successful in securing work in English-medium international schools. Being native-like in English was not sufficient. Those in particular who were not Finnish and not native English speakers and yet had English as their teaching subject considered their opportunities for employment weak. Not possessing strong enough Finnish skills was regarded as one of the main reasons for not gaining access into a Finnish-medium school (cf. George, Ghaze, Brennenstuhl, & Fuller-Thomson, 2012; Shumilova, Cai, & Pekkola, 2012). Some respondents claimed that the customs of using the mother tongue—instead of the target language—to a large extent in foreign language lessons has influenced the decision makers' ideas about teachers' necessary level of language skills. A lack of strong enough Finnish skills could also be an easy excuse for employers not to hire in Finnish-medium schools, stated in place of clearly discriminating reasons such as a 'wrong' nationality, skin colour or religion. Principals in Finland of all schools (or hiring agents in other contexts) can start the selection or rejection of applicants already at the point of formulating qualifications for a position (e.g. how many and which subjects are included in a teaching position) and differentiating applicants to be invited to interviews (based on what criteria). Thus they can possibly hinder the diversification of teachers in schools in the process.

The findings indicate that most of the factors that immigrant teachers considered as aids or hindrances to employment can be identical to those that Finnish-born teachers could face in their job search. More than one teaching subject can make a teacher more employable. Most subject teachers in Finland start their teaching careers with shorter or longer-term substitutions before securing permanent employment. Finding employment as an immigrant teacher may be more challenging, though, as the available positions are of course fewer for one who does not speak the local language at a level officially required of teachers in Finland (see Section 4.3; Schumilova, Cai, & Pekkola, 2012).

While language skills are an essential tool for teachers and the responsibility of immigrants to learn the local languages cannot be ignored, a required level of language proficiency is an issue that should be reconsidered at national levels in today's increasingly multicultural societies. The issue should be deliberated from the point of view of quality teaching and access of immigrant teachers into the schools. Is an excellent level of language skills still necessary for a teacher when s/he should no longer be the one holding long lectures in the classroom? Can a teacher facilitate learning with less than 'perfect' language skills? If they have pedagogical competence, they might well be able to set the stage for learning where the students' actions are in focus (rather than the teacher's talk). In foreign language teaching it should be more essential for the teacher to have excellent

language skills in the target language (content of the particular subject) instead of the local language. Today's schools should involve students to participate in problem-solving, cooperative projects and self-directed learning (e.g. Cho, Caeon, & Kapur, 2015; DiMarco & Luzzatto, 2010; FNBE, 2014). Thus teachers should learn to become facilitators and coaches who stay as support in the background—and speak less.

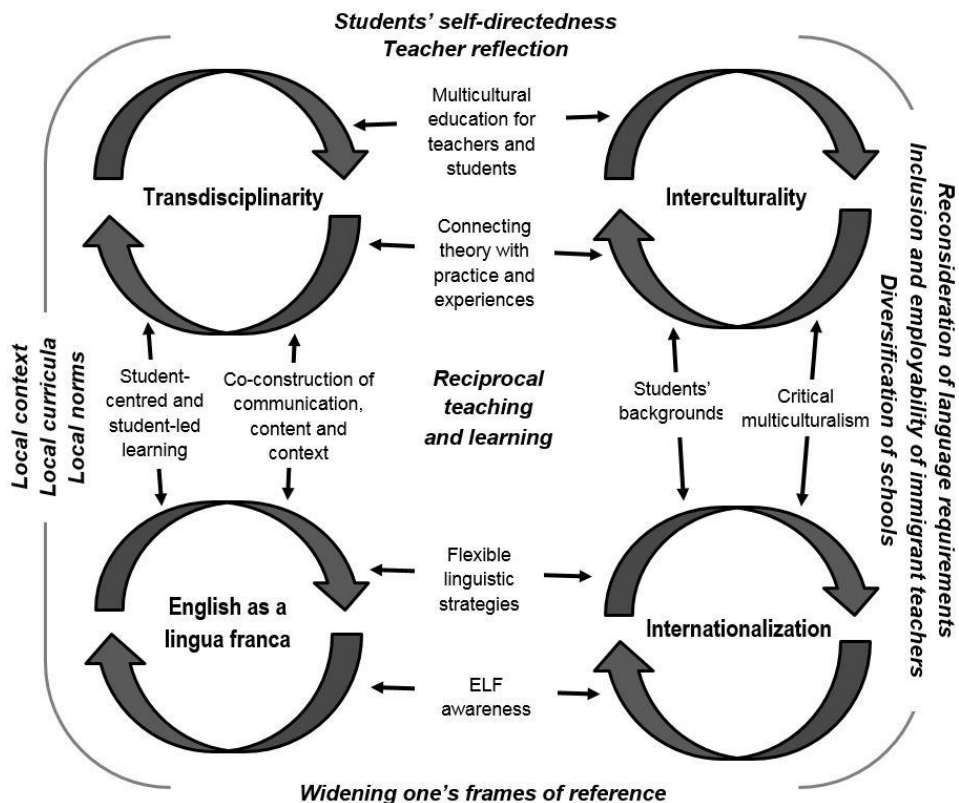
One of the goals of starting a teacher education programme in English was to lower the barriers for non-native Finnish speakers to enter the teaching profession. Having teachers of various backgrounds and languages as role-models can encourage students to accept diversity, see different kinds of diversity in each individual, and be more confident in using second and foreign languages (Kohli, 2009; Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009). The results in Publication V indicate that there is much work to be done before the diversification of teaching staff in Finnish schools can be realized.

## 7.2 Conclusions

This dissertation focused on the development of an international teacher education programme in Finland. The core themes in the study were internationalization, interculturality and using English as a lingua franca in a local transdisciplinary context of teacher education, as well as the interrelated topic of employability of its graduates. The Subject Teacher Education Programme in English (STEP) is now completing its fifth year. The programme has been the first of its kind in Finland and thus the research conducted in the programme can shed light on several factors that have need and potential for being improved within such a programme and issues that should be considered from the perspective of inclusion of diverse teachers within schools. The findings of this study can also give helpful hints and suggestions to mainstream teacher education programmes for how to pay critical attention to and incorporate multicultural aspects within a programme, and how transdisciplinary programmes could thus be developed to serve the needs and demands of today's students, teachers, institutions and society.

The development of an international teacher education programme is dependent on the cooperation of all teacher educators and administrative personnel and their willingness and flexibility to adopt new practices and step out of their comfort zones. Figure 2 (below) brings together the main theoretical points that have been further developed in this study. The four factors of internationalization, interculturality, transdisciplinarity and English as a lingua are elemental and central in international teacher education. The inclusion of immigrant teachers in local schools is viewed in this study as an intercultural phenomenon and investigated through their perceptions of employability. These factors and their interrelations need to be taken into account in order to develop a purposeful and constructively

aligned educational programme. The potential responsibility of the university educating immigrant teachers may include organizing other support systems so that the graduates can improve their social capitals in the host country. These core factors and the conceptualization of their interrelations is the theoretical contribution of this PhD study. While often only one of these factors is examined separately, this study weaves these factors together. On the one hand, it reveals the complexity of constructing an international teacher education programme but, on the other hand, provides a model for supporting teaching and learning in the context of international teacher education.



**Figure 2.** Theoretical framework for an international teacher education programme.

The different factors of internationalization, interculturality, transdisciplinarity and English as a lingua franca are constantly in fluctuation as depicted by the surrounding arrows in Figure 2 above. One does not function without the other and these factors influence each other. In an international programme teacher educators need to support students' development as teachers in the local context perhaps more than in mainstream teacher education programmes where all participants are familiar with the school context. Yet it is important that all students are guided to become self-directed so that they take initiative to bring up and reflect on meaningful experiences from their past and consider and contest their prior

beliefs and conceptions against the theories and pedagogies discussed in teacher education (Johnson, 2006; Loughran, 2006). Prior research proposes that student teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning may not be easily affected in teacher education (Löfström & Poom-Valickis, 2013) and thus this issue should become even more essential in an international programme. This study challenges the preparedness of teacher educators to adopt intercultural aspects in their teaching and shows that teacher educators did not have sufficiently shared critical conceptions of multiculturalism. It is common to include a course on multicultural education in a teacher education programme. This study suggests therefore that critical multicultural education and an opportunity for teachers to compare and contest their conceptions and behaviour toward multiculturalism are necessary as well so that they learn to recognize and properly deal with ethnocentric, stereotypical or culturalist viewpoints in teacher education. A programme is not truly intercultural if issues related to diversities and social justice are only discussed in one course but not integrated in actions and processes of the whole programme.

Internationalization of universities is usually bound with English as teaching language. The expectations of using English in an international programme should, however, not be attached to a standard form of native English but to flexible and cooperative ways of communication (Jenkins, 2014; Mauranen, 2010; Seidlhofer, 2011). The use of English as a lingua franca allows for the co-construction of communication and negotiation of meaning and context. ELF is thus an important tool in sharing and reflecting on experiences and finding anchoring points from one context to another. ELF enables the building of an intercultural learning environment. Interculturality in teaching–learning situations is enhanced when power structures can be more evenly negotiated and co-constructed with the use of ELF. By becoming aware and skilled in flexible ELF strategies, teaching and learning can become more student-centred and student-led when students are given space and responsibility to construct learning together by comparing their understandings and experiences and approaches through the viewpoint of their own subject. Transdisciplinarity in the programme gives an opportunity to integrate contents in ways that can benefit the future teacher. Although the transdisciplinary teaching environment demands more of both teachers and students, it also gives a platform where the participants can utilize pluralist approaches from various disciplines and find ways to develop teaching to the needs and complexities of today's multicultural societies and increased demands on new and meaningful approaches to learning (Keeves, Burley, & Alagumalai, 2013).

As schools have also become diversified by the presence of students from new dimensions of diversities, both visible and invisible, the internationalization and diversification of teaching force should also be welcomed and enabled. The diversification of societies needs mutual integration and mutual accommodation, not only from the (incoming) minorities but the existing majorities as well (Raunio,

Säävälä, Hammar-Suutari, & Pitkänen, 2011). In schools this may require a similar mindshift in the local language requirements as the use of ELF has brought in international circles of English so that the employability of immigrant teachers is improved. By incorporating new transdisciplinary and integrated approaches to learning and working, the position of language skills in the traditional sense in teaching can be challenged and replaced with pedagogical competences and reflection skills that better respond to the complexities of the modern society.

### **7.3 Practical implications and recommendations of the study**

Based on the findings of this dissertation, I propose several implications and recommendations for the development of EMI teacher education.

#### ***Critical multicultural education for teacher educators (Publications I & II)***

The migration of people has increased tremendously in different countries in the past years and societies and schools have seen a lot of changes with the increase of diversities. It is more and more important that teachers are educated with a critical understanding of multiculturalism that includes all diversities that we have as individuals (as related to our origin, language, gender, social background, sexual orientation, education, past experiences, emotional engagements, etc.), and that they have tools to deal with the various situations arising from diversities. Initial teacher education needs to bring up these issues in constructive ways and not only in separate multicultural education courses. The work must start from teacher educators by examining their own and peers' understanding of diversities so that they are later able to recognize and become cognizant of the various conceptions that student teachers have of diversity and of each other. It is only then that the teachers can more effectively role-model desirable behaviors and explicitly initiate discussion about how different situations may be handled in groups of diverse school students. Sharing conceptions and understanding of multicultural issues between teacher educators can also create cohesion between the different sessions and decrease contradictory viewpoints and unnecessary overlapping from one teacher educator's sessions to another. Continuous development is an important aspect of teachers' feeling of being professional and a mainstay for high-quality education.

In STEP, an attempt has been made and funding was applied for and granted to organize a two-day seminar about critical multicultural education. This seminar was geared for teacher educators who teach in the programme in order for them to share experiences in teaching in English and their conceptions on multiculturalism and interculturality, and compare and contest ideas with each other and current literature and research. However, such a seminar has not yet taken place. Further professional development events and workshops are regularly organized in different themes and topics, and thus there is 'competition,' time conflicts and time restrictions to attract and commit teacher educators to participate.

***Opportunities for teacher educators to share experiences and pedagogies (Publications I & III)***

In a new teacher education programme, it would be essential to arrange opportunities for teachers to collectively share and discuss their experiences of teaching an international group, teaching a transdisciplinary group, and teaching through English as a lingua franca—and make it part of the organization of the programme. Planning meetings have been arranged each semester in STEP for the subject didactics courses but it has not been possible for every teacher to participate each time. In those planning meetings time constraints do not allow to delve deeper into the specificities of teaching in the courses other than coordinating the topics and dividing responsibilities between the teachers. Some course units have not had any planning meetings although attempts have been made to invite all teachers to sit down face-to-face and discuss the contents and objectives of the particular courses. The change of some of the teachers in a course from one year to the next may add its own challenges and modifications as well. When an international programme is started, adequate planning time should be allotted to be shared together with all the teachers so that issues and aspects related to the coherence of the programme are sufficiently considered. It is important to allow enough negotiation about content in shared courses so that unnecessary overlapping of topics and themes can be avoided and yet links between different sessions can be found and pointed out to students. In (international) transdisciplinary teacher education programmes it is important that concepts, guidelines, and norms are clarified and negotiated clearly so that the constructive alignment of the programme is supported (Biggs & Tang, 2011). In international programmes not only international students come from different cultural, historical and educational systems but even domestic students come from different departments and disciplines that may have their own practices and preferred ways for, for example, teaching methods, assignments and assessment practices. Thus teachers need to be prepared and acquaint themselves well with the agreed-upon practices for a particular course. Otherwise, instead of a structured programme, students may get a picture of a puzzle that is disorganized and poorly planned.

***Getting to know the students (Publications I, III & IV)***

In the first STEP year, each teacher ‘interviewed’ students in the first sessions of his/her teaching in order to learn from the students’ backgrounds and experiences. Although this practice was interesting and useful for the teachers in order to get to know the students better and quicker, it became repetitious and tedious for the students. Therefore, in order to lessen the need to share general stories of the participants’ backgrounds in different teachers’ sessions, the students are now asked to write an introductory story about themselves prior to the start of the programme. In these stories they are asked for example to share about their prior education and expectations for the teacher education year, and explain what they are like as students. All this is in the effort to give the teachers a better idea of the students’

backgrounds and give them background information to prepare the sessions more appropriately. Although in theory this task could be helpful to teachers and at least hypothetically it can also make session planning easier, teachers may not always take/have the time to read these stories beforehand. The stories are also for the students to learn about each other. As studying in the programme involves a great amount of group work in and outside of sessions, knowing one another better makes interaction easier. A ‘grouping day’ has also been incorporated as one of the first days of the programme each year when I have taken the student cohort to a day’s outing. This day always includes work in mixed predetermined groups, which has been found to be an efficient way to help the students mingle and get to know each other outside the regular classroom. It has set a good starting point to building a feeling of belonging among the students. As students come from different linguistic backgrounds and likely have different accents in speaking English, it is also helpful that they get to become well familiar with each other’s different accents in the beginning of the programme so that hindrances for mutual intelligibility are alleviated.

### ***Introducing participants to ELF principles (Publications III & IV)***

Many teachers seemed to have mixed feelings of how they had succeeded and what was expected of one’s language skills in an ELF context. One of the key issues in EMI programmes language-wise is that all teachers and students are introduced to the principles of ELF communication so that they can adjust their expectations and behaviour accordingly (Dewey, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011). Teaching in an international teacher education programme may also be distinctively different compared to teaching in an EMI course that is lecture-based and related to subject content, rather than highly interactive small-group based teaching related to pedagogical knowledge and reflection of one’s own development as a teacher. Sharing experiences of using an L2 can help participants become more lenient and appreciative of their own English skills. Teachers could take charge of their own language education and later on this could lead to a negotiation and agreement of a framework for a language certificate in a particular context. In agreement with other researchers (Airey, Lauridsen, Räsänen, Salö, & Schwach, 2015; Kuteeva & Airey, 2014), the needs for language skills in different disciplines, and thus in a transdisciplinary teacher education context, vary and therefore language policies should be flexible enough so that they are practicable in a certain context—and more likely to be adhered to. Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that all teachers are able to teach in English although the majority may well be. In ELF contexts the participants’ level of English proficiency may be quite varied and thus adopting flexible accommodation strategies will help balance out the differences and communication can be co-constructed. If teacher educators have weaker English skills than their student teachers, they should take advantage of them by empowering and activating the students, which should also be a goal for the students with their future pupils. Activating students because of their different backgrounds or

experiences or because of differences in the participants' language proficiencies can both help to increase student-centredness and student activeness in the teacher education programme, which gives a good example for students to do the same in their future classrooms.

### ***Reconsidering teacher education pedagogy (Publication III)***

In order to accommodate to ELF, interculturality and a transdisciplinary programme, it is important to consider their effects on teacher education pedagogy. Especially if a teacher's language skills are limited, a change from a teacher-led discussion to incorporating more student-led discussion and group work with the help of carefully chosen material may be necessary and beneficial. Engaging and activating student teachers in sharing learning and constructing knowledge with peers will help them as future teachers to facilitate learner-centred activities. In international and transdisciplinary programmes it may be impossible for the teacher to be aware of the diverse contexts and educational systems that the students come from and to know when an issue needs more thorough examination. Therefore students need support in becoming self-directed and responsible of their own learning. Making space for group discussions and negotiating meaning among participants of different origins and experiences will enable both students and teachers to widen their perspectives and step into other people's positions to look at situations from different angles. In order for the goals of teacher reflection to be realized, it is important that learning is contextualized in students' diverse experiences.

### ***Support for employability and employment (Publication V)***

Although a teacher education programme does not and cannot guarantee a work placement to any graduates (at least not in Finland), the programme must provide sufficient information and guidance about legalities and other official requirements besides teacher qualifications, and provide relevant and realistic expectations of employment. Therefore it is important to keep track of the graduates' success with employment so that current and truthful information can be given and so that the programme can help prove its legitimacy. This is easier said than done, however, as students' contact details change after graduation and the programme depends on the activeness of the graduates to update their email addresses for the records. The graduates do not necessarily stay in the country of education either. Both domestic and international students may look for work opportunities elsewhere. Spreading word about the new international teacher education programme and its graduates within the host country is also important. This will provide opportunities for decision makers and school officials to become better aware of and acquainted with the programme and the diversities and social capitals that programme graduates can bring into the schools and society. It will also make possible for decision makers at government and school levels to contest their own assumptions and preconceptions about immigrant background teachers.



Language skills are closely tied to teacher qualifications. A personal responsibility of immigrant background students to invest in learning the local language(s) cannot be ignored but the findings in this study prompt considerations for additional support systems to be put in place. The students in STEP are made aware of the formal language requirements and they are also encouraged to start or continue their Finnish/Swedish studies. As the study load during the teacher education year is high, additional language studies in the same year are likely impossible to be included.

The University of Helsinki has been under great reconstructions during the academic year of 2015–16. The government of Finland has put forward unprecedented financial cuts and decreased the universities' funding, in particular that of the University of Helsinki. This will undoubtedly lead to further structural changes in the Department of Teacher Education that will eventually impact modifications in teacher education programmes as well. Unlike in many other countries, until now students (including international students) have enjoyed tuition-free university-level studies in Finland. However, the Finnish Government recently decided to introduce a minimum annual tuition fee of 1,500€ for non-EU/EEA students in Bachelor's or Master's degree programmes offered in English, starting from August 2017 at the latest. The annual fees that the University of Helsinki has since announced to start charging from its non-EU/EEA students in English-medium Bachelor's or Master's degree programmes will range from 10,000€ to 25,000€. As STEP is not a Bachelor's or Master's programme but a minor, it remains to be seen how the introduction of tuition fees or other structural changes will affect the future of the programme. The introduction of tuition fees sends a strong signal to 'outsiders' and it conflicts with universities' efforts to further internationalize (e.g. University of Helsinki, 2013, 2016). Tuition fees may decrease the number of international students coming to Finland and therefore they may also restrict the diversification of work force in Finland.

### ***Reconsidering teachers' language requirements (Publication V)***

A lack of strong enough local language skills can be an easy excuse for employers not to hire immigrant background teachers, stated in place of clearly discriminating reasons such as a 'wrong' nationality or skin colour. These are issues that should be carefully considered by the hiring agents. In Finland it is the 'education provider' (in practice the principal of a school) that holds a gatekeeper role and that makes the decisions to hire or not to hire a particular teacher. Although language skills are essential for teachers, a requisite level of language proficiency is an issue that should be reconsidered at national levels and deliberated from the point of view of social justice and discrimination, quality teaching and access of diverse teachers into the schools.

The idea of 'nativeness' or the first language (mother tongue) being a determinant in hiring teachers into positions in (international) schools is questionable. As discussed in this study, nativeness is a problematic concept and can be a source of

unequal treatment in hiring processes. In Finland there is also a difference in the required level of language proficiency in regular mainstream and ‘foreign language’ basic education where the latter has a lower requirement than the first-mentioned. Perhaps it is time to lower the mainstream language requirements as well in order to make room for linguistic diversity. As it should be the students and not teachers who are activated more in lessons through diverse tasks and engaging projects, teachers’ excellent language skills may not be as necessary as they were in lecturing type teaching.

Although communicative language teaching has been the way to teach foreign languages in schools for decades in many countries, this may not be realized in practice (in Finland: Harjanne & Tella, 2009). The conceptions of language teaching of mentors during teaching practice or the conceptions of language teaching of principals during hiring process can influence the access of immigrant background student teachers and teacher graduates to schools. Research suggests that in foreign language teaching in Finland teacher-centredness is quite considerable and teachers do not speak much target language in class (Harjanne, Reunamo, & Tella, 2015; Harjanne & Tella, 2009). And yet the goal of language teaching is to learn and encourage the use of the language already while learning. There clearly is need for raising more awareness in efficient methods of language teaching and re-examining the ways how language is taught in schools and what kind of language teaching pedagogies are taught in teacher education. Teachers need to learn to teach in ways in which they have not been taught (McLoughlin, 2013).

## 7.4 Trustworthiness and ethical considerations

I have been involved with the international Subject Teacher Education Programme since its very beginning stages of planning and piloting prior to its launch. My many roles as a researcher, teacher, a pedagogical coordinator and a tutor have enabled me to become well acquainted with all aspects of the programme, in particular those that have been examined in this study. Over the years I have thus gained valuable tacit information of the programme and its operations. Although the familiarity with the programme can be a strength, being a native researcher (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982) in the context can also be problematic as it may be more difficult to see problems or view certain practices critically. On the other hand, the experience I have gained in the programme can also be considered to have been helpful in carrying out the research and strengthening its trustworthiness (Shank, 2006). In conducting research, in particular qualitative, it is important to be aware of one’s own perspectives and prejudices.

This PhD research was constructed by compiling different sub-studies that investigated specific phenomena related to international teacher education. Each study published as a separate article had its own research data and research focus

to investigate a particular phenomenon. As an article in a scientific journal is limited to a certain word count, it also delimits the extent and scope of a study. Being able to include more data for each study may have given a deeper view into the phenomenon studied. All of the articles relate to multiculturalism in some ways. In order to receive more multifaceted and richer findings, three of the articles deal more directly with approaches and conceptions of multiculturalism within the programme, two of the articles deal with English as a lingua franca which is, already by its definition, inherently connected to multiculturalism. The fifth article takes a look at multiculturalism from another perspective and that is from the view of how immigrant graduates perceive their opportunities to enter the Finnish schools. The five sub-studies together thus formed a more holistic picture of the phenomena studied and created a coherent larger study. The years of conducting this research have also been an important period for me to not only construct the theoretical framework but study it in practice. Studying and researching multicultural, international education cannot be done without simultaneously contesting the conceptions and theories in one's personal thinking, behaviour and discourses.

Throughout this study one of the problems that I have dealt with is that although the goal in intercultural research is to learn not to categorize people based on their origins, subject background, gender, etc. (Dervin, 2011a), I have yet done so in some of the publications. It is problematic to divide participants into social categories (such as domestic or international students) as people move in and out of categories and belong to several simultaneously (Benjamin & Kuusisto, 2016; Gillespie, Howarth, & Cornish, 2012). Students are not selected to STEP based on their origin or nationality. However, in some of the publications of this study, the students have been either selected because of their background, or students have been categorized—considered different—because of their background.

In Publication I the participants were not divided into categories by the researchers but the study dealt with the dichotomies of a Finnish–international student as the distinction came up in the way the students themselves talked about each other or the way the teachers talked about them. Publication IV divided people based on their first languages (as stated by the participants) and countries of origin, which further enabled me to put distinctions on them according to Kachru's (1986) three circles of Englishes: the Inner Circle, Outer Circle and Expanding Circle. Kachru's concentric circles are by now critiqued and limited in their approximations (Jenkins, 2009). It is for example quite problematic to consider that 'nativeness' to a language would simply be tied to being born in a particular country. However, the circles serve in this study as generalizations of the different kinds of Englishes spoken in various parts of the world. The participants to Publication V were selected based on their immigration status (they were born outside of Finland, did not have Finnish as first language, and had moved to Finland as adults). The participants were not called immigrants in the programme but they agreed to be considered as such for the purposes of the study. Nevertheless, the

status or categorization of an immigrant is also problematic as it raises for example the question of when or whether an immigrant can consider him/herself simply a citizen of a country. When does or can an immigrant in Finland consider him/herself a Finn? Who is allowed to make these categorizations?

The dichotomy of a domestic/Finnish student versus international student was particularly fluid and ambiguous in STEP as many of the domestic students had extensive international experience of living and studying in various countries and they could thus be considered international. Can an 'international' student become a domestic student? Is it based on their learning the language or changing their citizenship? The praxis in STEP was not to treat students differently based on their background. However, equality does not always mean treating all students the same way. Sometimes, for the purposes of transdisciplinarity, it made sense to divide students into groups that were as heterogeneous as possible: for example, the groups could have at least one student who had done his/her basic education in Finland, at least one student who had done his/her basic education in a 'foreign' country, both female and male students, both Arts and Science students, and maybe yet distinctions among the subjects in the Arts and Science groups. This way the group could produce a diversity of perspectives and talents and expertise from different fields and different school systems. In some ways it is controversial that students are differentiated and categorized according to selected criteria in order to regroup them in constellations that break the original categorizations to spread out heterogeneity. However, collaborative learning (e.g. DiMarco & Luzzatto, 2010) in diverse mixed-skilled groups is a way to provide a learning environment that encourages shared responsibility and transdisciplinary peer learning and teaching. Thus the diversity of students and their backgrounds are utilized as opportunities.

Most of the participants in this study are non-native speakers of English. Although most of them can also be considered expert users of English, they have yet participated in the study in a foreign (or second) language. For the students this of course was natural as they had voluntarily sought to study in an English-medium programme. Nevertheless, in particular in the interviews, some may have given somewhat different answers if they had been able to use their first language. Three out of eleven teachers chose to be interviewed in Finnish instead of English because they felt more comfortable and confident in their first language. This likely helped neutralize power imbalance between the interviewer and the interviewee (cf. Holmes, Fay, Andrews, & Attia, 2013). Some others may also have code-switched in Finnish. When transcribing the extract in Publication IV, I requested the help of another researcher who was familiar with the accent of the students who had spoken the most in the extract. I felt this was important in order to get more out of the data and increase the trustworthiness of the study instead of merely rendering parts of the speech unintelligible because of the limitations of my own understanding or hearing.

Developing an international teacher education programme could of course be studied from many different perspectives, many of them more pragmatic and practical than the ones utilized and addressed in this study. The study of students' learning portfolios utilized students' authentic learning tasks and it was thus a pragmatic method that suited the examination of the particular phenomenon well (Publication II). Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that students do not necessarily say and write their genuine feelings and perceptions but they may say and write what they assume a teacher expects of them in an assignment. However, I believe that our own experiences and reflections on them have a great effect on how we are as teachers. Thus in my own epistemological view I put emphasis on personal experiences and the meanings that individuals give to their experiences and the sense they make of them (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). This has led to my choice of the qualitative interview as a method to bring up participants' perceptions of two different phenomena (accommodating to ELF, Publication III; interculturality, Publication I). Nevertheless, interview may be a more limited method to find out adequate information of the particular phenomena as individuals are not always aware of their own conceptual models. However, qualitative research is not only about the method. In this study, it was a way to understand certain phenomena and interpret people's experiences. The examination of discourses makes explicit such latent features that individuals may not recognize themselves or do not want to specify (Brown & Clarke, 2006; Dervin, 2013).

The criterion of validity describes the degree to which research represents the phenomena and practices that it examines (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). As this PhD study is only limited to one context, it does therefore not reveal any conclusive findings of the prevalence of the studied phenomena. As each context is unique and each sub-study only provides limited data, making any generalizations from this study is inappropriate. Nevertheless, there are likely features in this study that would find resonance in other similar international programme contexts (Richards, 2003). In order to generalize any findings, a more comprehensive study of different contexts would be required, along with such data collection methods that would accommodate operating with large data bases. A comparative study between different contexts would highlight differences and similarities between different contexts. The final section will introduce some ideas for follow-up studies and explain why and how they may be helpful in developing an international teacher education programme further and integrating it in a local context.

## **7.5 Suggestions for further research**

The present study has provided the first findings of how an international subject teacher education programme has fared in the Nordic context. Based on the number of applicants each year, the programme continues to have a demand among

both international and domestic students. This study, however, has only paid attention to certain aspects of the programme and to a limited extent, and thus it would be important to carry out new and follow-up studies, among students in the programme, graduates of the programme, teacher educators, and mentors and principals in schools.

One of the central ideas in the international programme is to help develop the students' sense of multiculturalism, their approaches to multiculturalism, and help develop a critical ability to analyze their own and others' discourses and behaviours. Although the issues related to multiculturalism should definitely not be limited to the international programme—these issues demand and deserve the attention of every student teacher, teacher and teacher educator—the small size of the programme has made it a suitable forum to try out new ways of doing things and implement changes easier and quicker than in the much larger mainstream programme. Some possible follow-up research questions are the following: What kind of critical multicultural competences do graduates have and what kind of competences do they feel they need in the schools? What kind of competences are developed during the programme? What kind of competences are developed during the practices? How do graduates talk about multiculturalism and what kind of multiculturalism do they encounter in the schools? How do teacher educators consider their own critical abilities to deal with diverse student groups? One of the articles in this dissertation dealt with student assessment and the development of intercultural competences. Students are influenced in their learning by what they think is being assessed and thus they try to learn what they think will be assessed or they may behave in certain ways in order to show preferred changes in their beliefs and actions regarding the intercultural merely for the benefit of better assessment. It would be interesting and meaningful to study further how the assessment practices (types of assessment and tasks related to assessment) support the goals of interculturality.

The STEP Programme has incorporated a different approach to subject didactics from the general Finnish-medium subject teacher education. Because of the way the programme is structured, students are taught in transdisciplinary groups instead of subject specific. The scope of this study did not include research into the general competences of the graduates. However, in the future it would be important and enlightening for programme development to find out how the STEP graduates perceive that the teacher education programme has equipped them with teaching competences for the real world. What kind of differences exist between the competences that graduates from the international teacher education programme possess compared to those who have completed mainstream teacher education? What are the competences that graduates appreciate and benefit from the most and what competences do they consider they lack?

In order to engage teacher educators in their own development as teacher educators of an international and transdisciplinary teacher education programme, a

joint project of action research could be organized where the teachers examine and contest their own pedagogies and developmental challenges and conceptions related to teaching in the transdisciplinary context and their intercultural learning. This would empower the teacher educators in their own development and the 'intrusion' of being examined by an outsider or a colleague would be avoided. These studies could further shed light on any support that teacher educators would welcome and accept for the development of their own competences.

In order to gain longitudinal data of the employment situations of the programme graduates, it is necessary to continue collecting and analyzing data from each cohort. This will allow finding out about the graduates' long-term employment opportunities and success. Their experiences can also give relevant feedback of additional support systems that should be implemented within or outside the programme. It would also be important to gather and analyze data of principals' attitudes to diverse job seekers and their expectations of applicants in order to see the perspectives of those who make hiring decisions in the field.

Guided practices are an integral part of teacher education and thus practice placements at local schools form an essential part of the teacher education programme. Much work has been done to form relationships with different local schools and train school teachers as mentors so that student teachers can be placed with them for guided teaching practices. The perspectives and experiences of the mentors have not yet been studied, but mentors would be a significant source of knowledge of how successful the integration of theory and practice is by the students of the particular programme, and how they perceive the student teachers' existing, lacking, or requisite competences as teachers. In addition, research into mentors' competences in the role of mentoring as perceived by the student teachers and the mentors' approaches to multiculturalism could reveal suggestions and necessities for further support or training for mentors. It may also create opportunities for closer cooperation between the schools and the teacher education programme.

As internationalization of teacher education (as it is understood in this dissertation) is still in its infant steps, little is yet known of its opportunities in the future. Education exports, including marketing and exporting teacher education, are also becoming more sought after worldwide. Thus the factors of internationalization, interculturality and English as a lingua franca that have been examined in this study can shed light for such aspects that are requisite for a transdisciplinary teacher education programme that would be developed in a new context.

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